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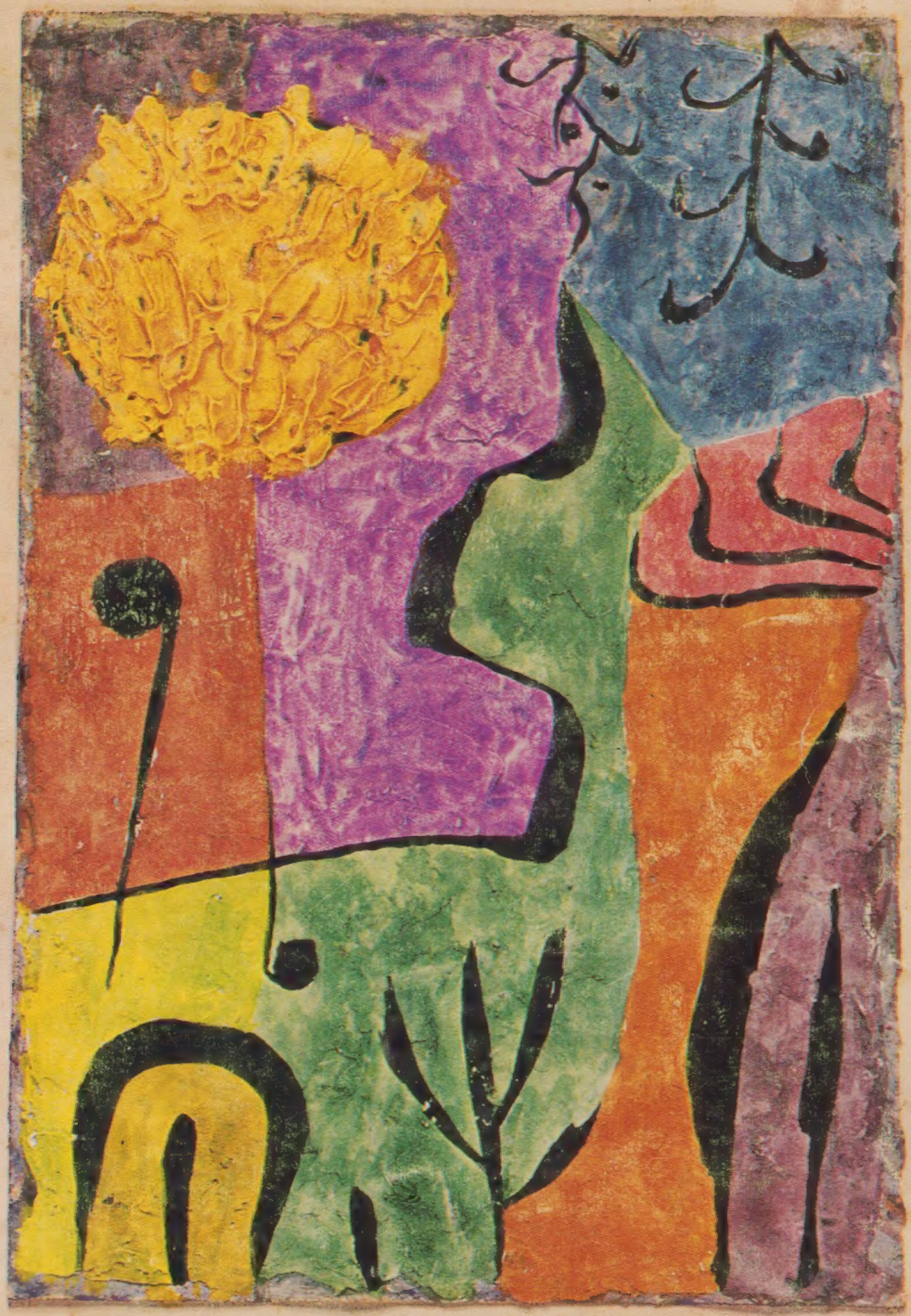
SPECIAL ISSUE: PAUL KLEE



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DAVID VON SCHLEGELL

RECENT SCULPTURE

THE PACE GALLERY 32 E 57 NY

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PAUL KLEE,
PARK NEAR B, c. 1938.
Oil on paper, 9 x 6″.
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

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MILTON RESNICK

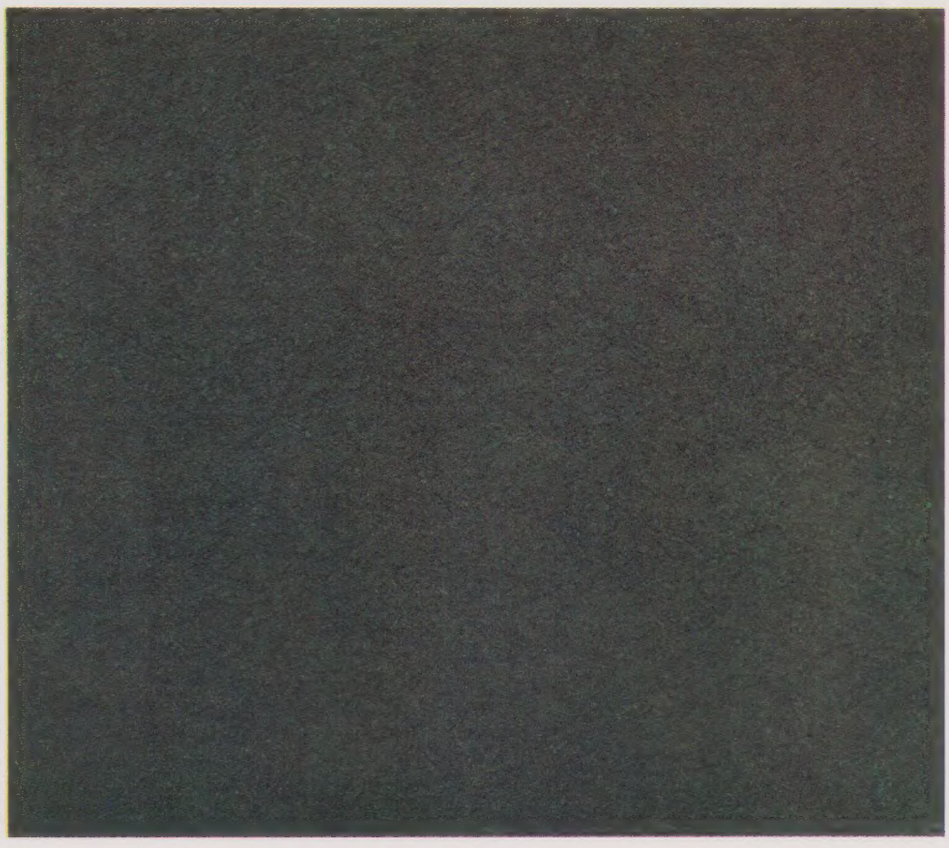
A painting, particularly an oil painting with its breathing, changing skin, is less smooth, less finished than its reproduction. A painting, once made, is always finite, subject to the pressures of time and space, its size irrevocable. In reproduction, the artist's image is often telescoped or enlarged, often clarified and even heightened, but in every case is altered by the camera. The smooth reproduction, no longer at the mercy of the human eye or hand, can go on forever. The very process of reproduction eliminates the problem of paint, its toughness and how it looks, which can get in the way and blur the choice between dark and light, good and evil, and make tenuous the simple dichotomies that, labeled in the mind, add up to our mental image of the artist's image. "I like the look of oil paint on canvas," Gertrude Stein once wrote in an effort to define the art and explain its attraction for her. Which brings us back to square one: a painting involves paint. Many outstanding artists (Ad Reinhardt and Marcel Duchamp among them) have anguished over the physicality of their art as opposed, say, to the majority of American Abstract Expressionists for whom the texture of each brushstroke became almost a religious tenet of their aesthetic.

Milton Resnick, who chronologically belongs to the Abstract-Expressionist generation, is an artist whose every brushstroke is a building block, whose walls of paint-crusted and creviced surfaces are locked to the canvas where they move and change without extending outward. The edge of the canvas is the edge of the world: a thick, heavily textured world in which one cannot locate a picture plane or horizon line, where the movement is all in its congealing surface and pinpoints of light which seem to emanate from within. From the dramatic contrasts of color-sweeps in de Kooning or the speed of Kline's black brushstroke, the 'painterliness' of Abstract Expressionism in Resnick's work of the Seventies has evolved into something different. Resnick's paintings are all concerned with mass, with color as accumulation on the surface, with the interstices of where two colors meet and meld into each other.

A few of the artist's recent works fall into the monochromatic category, such as the all-gray *Winter X* where the pigment seems to have been applied tactily and the movement is in the degree of light via the degree of thickness, in the rising and falling of the paint textures. More than half of the current exhibition, however, consisted of paintings that dealt in both paint and color build-up, in the moment of many layers of different colors meeting, passing, and marking each other. *Mars, Earth,* and *Moon* are dark and light works, respectively, but one cannot talk for very long about the interlocking colors that make up their surfaces because the color changes are too close-hued and too various to be outlined in words. In 1963, Resnick painted a picture called *Leaving Color* because he decided "color wasn't something he needed, but something to use in giving painting dimension." In his last New York show in the Sixties, at the Howard Wise Gallery in 1964, Resnick's paintings seemed drenched with spots of impressionistic color, like petals thrown up in a shower over the canvas. After this exhibition, however, the artist retreated into himself, deciding that these and his earlier paintings were made by taking a series of "fingerholds" on the canvas; what interested him now was the total picture rather than the things in the picture. Resnick did not exhibit in New York again until 1972. Meanwhile, his approach changed. He began to work in terms of an accumulation of small strokes, using the brush, the edge of the brush, and sometimes his hand until the paintings became an accretion of an experience rather than the tracing of a series of gestures. In his current allover works, there is a striving after wholeness, a striving to see and express with infinite care the nuances of a single moment, making each painting into a separate, life-time journey.

At the end of the Fifties, Milton Resnick was recognized as one of the most brilliant talents of the younger generation of Abstract-Expressionist artists. In 1962 Resnick, who eschews labels, obliged with a long string of definitions of what his painting was not. "I am not the follower of Monet," he wrote, "I am not an admirer or follower of de Kooning. I am not an Action painter. I am not an Abstract Expressionist. I am not younger than anybody or older. . ." Except, of course, Resnick was and is older with a long history of accomplished paintings behind him. His range spans Picasso-inspired paintings of the late Thirties, Abstract-Expressionist and Monet-like paintings of the late Fifties and early Sixties, and his allover, nonrelational color-field paintings of today. His use of the finest European linen for his pre-stretched canvases, his application of literally pounds of paint, based on the idea that images which project themselves like ghosts in the early stages of a work must be painted out—ergo, paint build-up equals removal, making each painting (some weighing as much as 450 pounds) literally a problem to get up off the floor—are part of Resnick's current aesthetic arsenal. The history of each painting is built into the painting, and Resnick's machine-gun rapid negative statements about what his art is not are intended to and succeed in ending in the positive fact that, beyond verbalization, his art is too solid to be amorphous, too heavy to be quick or easy to see, and uses color as a light dimension. It is painting using paint to make a unique physical statement. (Max Hutchinson, *April 26-June 30*)

Corinne Robins



Milton Resnick, Night, 1977. *Oil on canvas, 93 x 104½". Courtesy Max Hutchinson Gallery.*

THE GODDESS AND THE SLAVE

There is an increasing awareness in enlightened contemporary society of the fact that images of women made by men—however sympathetic the artist or however archetypal the image—tend to be more about male fantasy and sexual politics than about the true nature of woman or the experience of womanhood. Presumably, then, a show of such images grandly titled "The Goddess and the Slave: Women in Nineteenth Century Art" designed for a sophisticated New York audience would address itself to such an enlightened consciousness, or would at least acknowledge the considerable scholarly and feminist attention that has for some time now been focused upon such problematic reassessment. That this was not the case with the summer exhibition at the Hammer Galleries was especially unfortunate in that there were a number of fine and interesting pictures there worthy of serious treatment.

Virginia Woolf noted the historical tendency of men to use women as "looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size." In order to accomplish this, woman herself had to appear much smaller, weaker, duller, and devoid of will than by nature she actually was. The "living mind" that Margaret Fuller (writing at a time when many of the Hammer pictures were painted) saw as the essence of female reality had to be transformed into the malleable "plaything." Her contemporary Renoir declared "gracefulness is a woman's domain and even her duty." The divide-and-conquer strategy that has deprived woman of her wholeness and her individuality through the creation of one-dimensional stereotypes is well represented in the pictures collected for the Hammer show. The impact of the entire panorama is one in which character is everywhere lacking, while varieties of male-defined "beauty" and grace abound.

Charles-Emile Lecomte-Vernet, Rebecca, 1869. *Oil on canvas, 45 x 31¼".* *Courtesy Hammer Galleries.*

The erotic "sex object" stereotype is strikingly represented by the show's keynote image, Lecomte-Vernet's hypnotic *Rebecca,* whose shadowed bedroom stare and rounded, bead-caressed bosom both speak of a receptive availability, while the smooth curves of her water jug and the succulent fullness of the cactus behind reiterate sensual promise. Yet another inviting metaphor is provided by the watery flow in the crevice of the well. The viewer is similarly though less artfully enticed by Comerre's *Harem Girl with Waterpipe,* where the message of the glazed stare, parted lips, and transparently draped body display is confirmed by the narcotic hookah vapors, the lush exotic setting, and the tambourine which echoes the curvature of the woman's pelvic region. (A somewhat more appropriate use of the same instrument can be found in Bouguereau's virginal *Girl With Tambourine.*)

A number of *femme fatale* images stress the dangerous dimension of sexual liaison with woman, threatening as it does the strength and separateness of the male. In Solomon's *Samson and Delilah,* the hideously witch-like mistress taunts the captured strongman with her loosened bodice and his shorn hair—emblems of her emasculating power. More directly, the Cleopatra figure of Winter's *Fantaisie Egyptienne* strides powerfully toward the viewer inspiring the dual response of fascination and repulsion, with reptilian venom directed both to the sensuous flesh of her breast and outward to those whom she encounters. Clairin's *Chimera* extends the *femme fatale* to monstrous dimensions.

The vast majority of the paintings show women voyeuristically observed as isolated objects or in enclosed settings representative of the stereotypes of domesticity or of an "inward nature." Seldom do they interact productively with their environment or with other beings. Often the pictures seek to illustrate the passive nature of women which can only be brought to life through contact with the active male. Thus we have Laurens' withering Carolingian princess overpowered by the empty throne in *Le Dernier Trone Carolingien,* the nervous expectancy of the bored Roman maidens who sense the approach of their lovers in Alma-Tadema's *Who Is It?,* and the static lassitude of the women in Bridgeman's *Arab Courtyard* who sit immobile among children and does, a scene of idyllic repose. In Constant's *Le Repos* the vacuousness of a similar courtyard where resting beauties pass their time staring out beyond the walls is represented by the great empty copper vessel which occupies center stage. An illustrative hanging might have placed this picture next to Clairin's *Le Paon Blanc,* where a Seville patio is the scene of a visitation by a magnificent white peacock before whom the Moorish women prostrate themselves with flower offerings. One needn't be a Freudian to figure that one out.

The one exceptional image of a woman in an active societal role is that of the *Woman Jurist Pleading a Case in Court* by Jean Berand. Yet the treatment of the scene is of an anecdotal sort that recalls Samuel Johnson's equation of such women with dogs who walk like men—marveling not that they do it well, but that they are able to do it at all.

Numerous other types abound: the innocent virgin, the virtuous mother, the deceitful courtesan, the inspiring muse, and, yes, the beautiful goddess. A number of the pictures are simply studies or portraits of women in a variety of poses and styles—their curves and costumes a vehicle for the artist to convey his understanding of that supposedly universal ideal that is "beauty." Whereas this is certainly not the place to expound upon the nature of beauty as it concerns painting or women, it does seem relevant to recall the relationship of the concept to subjective taste, and to the eye of a particular beholder. Pictures and women are "beautiful" to those who have set the standards of beauty which they fulfill. When Stuart Pivar, organizer of the Hammer show, tells us "the students of the history of womanhood who will be attracted by the admittedly dramatic title. . .are welcome to see in these pictures the view of women in the era before ours," but then tells us that the main purpose of the exhibit was "to exhibit some very beautiful paintings and to discover what about them has aroused such current interest and approval," we turn instead to our own era: beautiful in what sense; who, exactly, is approving—and why? (Hammer, *June 6-July 1*)

Judith C. Rohrer

ALAN SARET

Alan Saret, Ghosthouse, 1975. *Artpark.*

Alan Saret's place in the history of late Sixties art has never been adequately examined. Because Saret severed all his gallery connections, seeking alternative means of exposing his work, he has not received the coverage or attention that otherwise would have been his. Also, he was ill-served by his inclusion in Robert Morris' "Anti-Form" article in 1968. Not only did this title create enduring misconceptions about the nature of the developments presented, but the essay set up the artists included to look like children of a movement that Morris had fathered. Independently, and before Morris began his felt pieces, Saret had been working to free his sculpture from the precision and measured constraints of minimalism, experimenting with the lightweight and flexible properties of sheet and wire materials. His art was "anti-ruler and measure" but not "anti-form."

Although his current work can be traced back to ideas associated with post-minimalism, his recent projects seem tied to a fundamentally different set of concerns. His work continues to elaborate systems of matter-processing, but he has moved decisively away from a preoccupation with aesthetic and perceptual problems and his art now is explicitly identified with questions of human and social transformation. The ambitions that guide his work, notably the creation of a spiritual ambience through a synthesis of culture and nature, distinguish him as a visionary artist.

A recent major project, the *Ghosthouse,* constructed at Artpark in 1975, is representative of his current orientation. It is a distinctly architectural undertaking, reflecting Saret's own original training as an architect and perhaps to some extent his work under Paolo Soleri. He was specifically concerned with the problem of shelter as a basic material need of human life, and aesthetic questions became inseparable from social and ecological ones.

The *Ghosthouse,* in one sense, is a critique of the use of materials in a technologically advanced society. It is built completely out of steel and plastic, two substances that typify the waste and misuse of the products of modern industry, and the house is a demonstration of how such materials can be used efficiently and imaginatively. The basic stuffs he worked with were long rolls of ordinary steel fencing; he devised an intricate system of folding large sections of the fencing into extended units, which were then assembled to form the house. Pieces of very thin plastic were attached to it, like a skin, for protection against sun and rain.

For Saret, one of the major formal achievements of the *Ghosthouse* was the absence of any monolithic structural elements. Using non-rigid, flexible substances, as in much of his earlier sculpture, he has effected an open "dispersal of structural matter" in which no element is thicker than an eighth of an inch. Its name was derived, in part, from the fact that structure is more absent than present. In a sense, he has approximated the fineness of an organic form that is both translucent and responsive to the touch, like a leaf or membrane. He wanted to create the feeling of a breathing, luminous canopy. For Saret, "it was like a hollow mountain inside, but like a mountain turned to meshwork so it is very permeable to light, and the light is caught on a multitude of delicate veils." And the harmonious effect of light on the inhabitants of the house was of paramount importance to him.

The *Ghosthouse* recalls the architecture of the German visionaries in the early 1920s: the crystalline projects of Bruno Taut and the biomorphic forms of Hermann Finsterlin. But it is equally a descendant of Paxton's Crystal Palace, with which it shares a lightweight and light-filled structural aesthetic. Of the total area of the *Ghosthouse*'s metal meshwork structure, ninety percent was void. It is this economical and minimal use of steel that sets his work in opposition to Richard Serra's or any art that celebrates masses of densely concentrated metal.

Significantly, the *Ghosthouse* was built out of materials available at a hardware store, and it was erected by untrained workers. It was not constructed according to a pre-planned design; the specific form that the house finally assumed emerged out of the process of working on it. It seems to have been a development to which different people contributed and which changing circumstances modified. As in his work of the Sixties, indeterminacy and chance were factors in its realization. Even in its final state Saret did not feel it was complete or wholly satisfactory; it was a tentative statement, part of an ongoing process of formulating principles for new systems of building.

His projects in the near future include finding a piece of land on which to reerect the *Ghosthouse* and continue his architectural investigations. But he is equally interested in working on agricultural problems and studying wind and solar energy. For him, art is bound up with the material fabric of human life, and in assessing other artists he is as interested in the way they actually live as in their art work.

Saret, who has lived in India, combines a deep interest in mysticism and eastern religions with a belief in the revolutionary potential of architecture. It might be misleading to call his work political, for his frame of reference is definitely cosmic, but his art is linked with a radical social analysis and a grim appraisal of the present state of the earth. He believes strongly that artists should be implicated in an effort to work out a balance between nature and technology, and he sees the role of the artist as analogous to that of a healer. Saret has recalled that Father Divine had a method of healing that consisted of fixing in his mind an image of the sick person as healthy, a "well vision." The visionary artist, likewise, he believes, needs to have an image of human society in good health, in a resplendent harmony with the natural world.

Jonathan Crary

BROOKLYN COLLEGE

The story of the Art Department at Brooklyn College is being told in paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, and prints in two concurrent exhibitions: one, the current faculty, at the Robert Schoelkopf Gallery; the other, the former department members, at Davis & Long. It is the story of how a stick-in-the-mud department became almost overnight a new Bauhaus; and then how, fifteen years later, the Bauhaus system was modified, and eventually a new art department came into being in anticipation of the new art climate of the 1960s. In the process Brooklyn College, which had been thought of as a center of abstract art, became a center of figure painting.

At Schoelkopf the exhibitors shown include the distinguished names of Lennart Anderson, Anne Arnold, Allan D'Arcangelo, Lee Bontecou, Lois Dodd, Jimmy Ernst, Philip Pearlstein, Walter Rosenblum (photographer), and Albert Terris; also Robert D'Alessandro and Bernard Cole (photographers), Fred Badalamenti, Paul Gianfagna, Samuel Gelber, Joseph Groell, Robert Henry, Janet Hildebrand, R.J. Kreznar, Ronald Mehlman, Richard Navin, Gerald Samuels, David Sawin, Sylvia Stone, William T. Williams, Zalmar. This makes 25 out of a total of 39 artists in a department representing a variety of contemporary styles and points of view.

The second group, at Davis & Long, consists of many of those associated with the Brooklyn College Art Department since 1942: Berenice Abbott (photographer), Calvin Albert, Milet Andrejevic, John Robert Beauchamp, Ilya Bolotowsky, Louise Bourgeois, Ray Ciarrochi, Bruno Civitico, Serge Ivan Chermayeff (architect), Ivan Chermayeff (industrial designer), Burgoyne Diller, Sidney Geist, Stanley William Hayter, Carl Holty, Harry Holtzman, Howard Kanovitz, Gyorgy Kepes, Irving Kriesberg, Gabriel Laderman, Ad Reinhardt, Jose de Rivera, Leatrice Rose, Mark Rothko, Alfred Russell, Lucas Samaras, Kurt Seligmann, Joseph Stefanelli, and Robert Jay Wolff—27 names out of 50 in all.

Since these two exhibitions overlap each other in time, or dovetail, they ought, by rights, from an historic as well as an artistic standpoint, to have been shown together instead of separately. Yet if one exhibition is seen immediately after the other, the impact is overwhelming. What other college or university art department could claim an equal number of well known or distinguished artists on its roster?

Brooklyn College Art Department was not always as distinguished. The earliest mention of art in a College Bulletin was in 1930-31 which listed one class only, for men, in "Descriptive Geometry, Mechanical Drawing and Perspective." By 1941, by slow stages, it had reached the point of being able to list "Life Drawing" for men and women in discreet sexual separation.

Although altered somewhat, the present-day Art Department dates from 1942 when Serge Ivan Chermayeff, architect and former partner of Erich Mendelsohn, was named by President Harry D. Gideonse as chairman. His program of modernization was an epic struggle against an entrenched mediocrity. Typical of this was the front-page story in *The Brooklyn Eagle* of March 28, 1944 which reported that two faculty members had resigned in protest over "the unwholesome and demoralizing conditions for Americans teaching in the department" resulting from Chermayeff's having ordered "lewd and lascivious" Surrealist magazines—*View* and *VVV*—for the college library. Chermayeff's appointment of foreign-born artists met with even greater resistence, and there were more headlines. A reporter asked Gideonse: "Is there no American tradition in the department any longer?" To his eternal credit, Gideonse replied: "There never was."

What Chermayeff succeeded in introducing was virtually the earliest comprehensive program in an American liberal arts setting based on the German Bauhaus. The new program commenced with the Basic Design Course in which the students mastered the abstract elements common to all the arts, and were encouraged to experiment with different materials. Bit by bit other workshops, fusing the fine with the applied arts, were added: in painting, sculpture (separate workshops in metal, wood, and plaster), architecture, photography, typography, theater, and costume. Chermayeff's key appointments were Gyorgy Kepes, author of the influential *Language of Vision* and later associated with M.I.T., and Robert Jay Wolff, an abstract painter. Both had been associated with Laszlo Maholy-Nagy at the Chicago Institute of Design—at first known as The New Bauhaus. Wolff became chairman in 1946.

The main role of the art department during this period was not the training of potential professionals. It was felt much more important to concentrate—granted a liberal arts setting—upon a general culture with the idea of making individuals more sensitive to design in the fullest environmental sense, thus to produce healthier members of a more rational society. Like the original Bauhaus, it sought to undermine the pride of class which put a wall between fine artists and artisans. The Bauhaus was against individualism and sought to revive the lost unity of all the arts in relation to modern architecture.

A socially significant application of Bauhaus philosophy was the adaptation of the Basic Design Course to the needs of students majoring in education. These courses, so different from the typical "art education" courses stressing methods of teaching and given by educators rather than artists, were planned and directed by Harry Holtzman, a founder of the American Abstract Artists in 1936 and an enthusiastic teacher.

But to outsiders the subtleties of Bauhaus thinking were often misunderstood. What was seen from outside was a department which had become a Bastogne of abstract art. In truth it was never monolithic. Unlike General Anthony McAuliffe's reply of "Nuts!" to the Germans who called on him to surrender the real Bastogne, the cries of "Nuts!" began to come from inside the fort, especially from Alfred Russell, a strong teacher with outspoken opinions who was in full reaction against his own abstract past. When Pearlstein arrived on the scene in 1963, the seeds for a new direction had already been sown, although today he can be seen as the key to many subsequent developments. For, like all Utopian enterprises, this one was doomed by its own inner contradictions: on the one hand a philosophy stressing anonymity and a blurring of the differences between the fine and applied arts, on the other, a group of the most dedicated individualists to be found anywhere. What happened was that the Bauhaus foundation simply shifted its stance.

The department which began to emerge in the 1960s is like one of Ad Reinhardt's art trees which blossomed originally in the newspaper *PM* in the 1940s. Each leaf on the tree stands for a different style—minimal abstraction, pop, op, abstract expressionism, neotraditionalism, realism, etc. But the tree trunk itself continues to be labeled Bauhaus. The point is that the system works as well for a student of figure painting as it does for a course in abstract art. And there is a new openness. An example of how open the department has become is the revival of drawing from the antique cast. For various reasons this practice has been held in modern times as the essence of a discredited academic system. At Brooklyn some elements of it have merged with Paul Gianfagna's innovative course in anatomy, one of the best to be given anywhere in America.

Presiding over this metamorphosis which came about with hardly any internal friction were Milton Brown and Morris Dorsky, the present chairman, whose direction has had much to do with the feeling of goodwill which prevails within the department. An illustrated catalogue accompanies both exhibitions with an historical essay by art historians Jerry Viola and Mona Hadler. Robert Schoelkopf, Davis & Long, *September 13-October 8*)

Lawrence Campbell

KERMIT ADLER

"No ideas but in things" is the famous charge William Carlos Williams made to the poets of his day. Its essence is that mundane things contain a vitality that can be released through the ordering of denotive words on the page. This dictum continues to have influence in all the arts, and the painting of Kermit Adler is a furtherance of it. Adler composes commonplace things on paper and has an affinity for subjects that denote the urbane, more precisely New York, style of life.

Adler is a watercolorist; his forte is his ability to reduplicate textures and to give weight and volume to the things he paints through the application of discrete tonal daubs. Watercolor is traditionally a medium of delicacy, but Adler uses it in a bold way that would translate into impasto if he painted in oils. For all the Americanness of much of the food he fixes on, his style is rooted in the French tradition: Matisse and Bonnard are forebears for their evocations of the "good life," and Bonnard is especially recalled for his soft contours. In some paintings one thinks of Watteau, for Adler's dashing style endows his subjects with a luminosity that betokens evanescence. Fine wine, Camembert, raw oysters (some of the things that Adler paints) have only an instant of perfect ripeness; flowers are only momentarily at peak bloom.

As a theme flowers are timeless, but Adler manages through context to give his eternal subject contemporaneity; for example, tiger lilies grow wild in many of the haunts artists repair to. I am reminded of the observation someone made that the Abstract Expressionist movement was stronger for having had Cornell working in its midst. Having Adler to chronicle the amenities that pertain to the gamut of artists working in the multiplicity of modes currently flourishing gives substantial definition to this period.

Another flower painting, this one notable for the complexity of its execution, is of a red carnation in a glass of water. Adler favors aerial perspective and the glass is on a tablecloth that is a field of unvariegated floral forms. The contrast between the flatness of the textile pattern and the voluminous fresh flower with its shadowy crevices is striking.

But food is Adler's great subject. His brush emits a visual monosodium glutamate that perks up whatever foodstuff it essays. *Peanut Butter and Jelly* is a tour de force: Adler renders the translucence of the jelly and the pasty smear of peanut butter. When Wayne Thiebaud's palette knife slices through creamy paint, there is a pie that looks good enough to eat; but we never lose our heads over Adler's goodies, being always aware of the accretion of paint strokes. As in the carnation painting there is contrast between flat elements, the red and blue circles of Wonder Bread wrapper, and pith, the edibles. *Second Avenue Breakfast,* besides rubious salmon, features a florid cream-cheese-laden bagel that could stand in for a chrysanthemum in another painting.

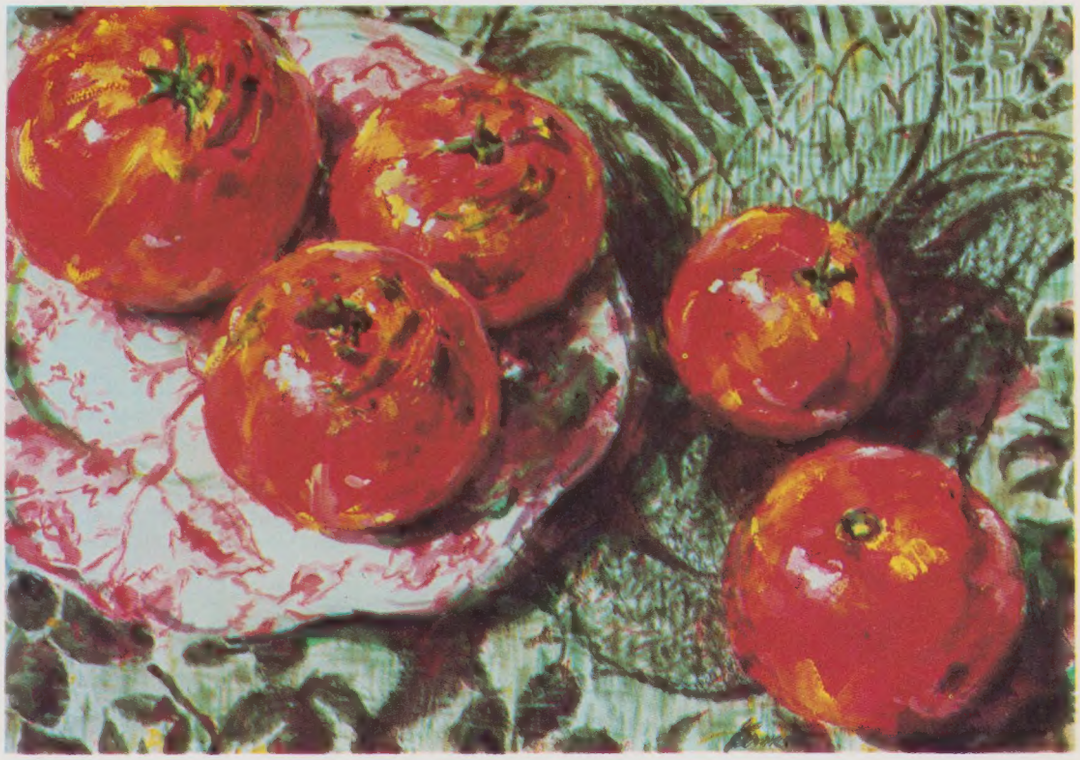
Fast Food wittily belies all I've said about Adler's proclivity for nature: it is oreos and mallow cookies. In homage to Cézanne who achieved an apple through the building up of motley reds, yellows, and greens, Adler achieves a domed mallow cookie through the contiguity of brown tones for its chocolate coating. Spots of white indicate sheen. Pop art is an obvious influence if only for the licence it gave to elevate things of our contemporary culture to the status of art. As it was Cézanne's wish to approximate the great art of museums, Adler wishes his still humbler forms to aspire to Cézanne.

Salad evinces Adler's lack of hesitancy about filling the page. Spheral forms—mushrooms, lettuce head, and tomatoes—fill one half of the diagonal division while projecting forms—celery, green onions, and cutting knife—occupy the other. I am reminded of great Spanish painters such as Zurbarán. The salad ingredients are caught in a penultimate moment of quiet, before they lose their essences in combination.

Eschatological notions about a salad? "No ideas but in things," for all its objectivity, is fraught with much feeling about the things selected for notation. There is unstated poignancy about Williams' white chickens and red wheelbarrow on which "so much depends." Williams tended to emphasize the rustic and this is not wholly pertinent to Kermit Adler who possesses a touch of the exotic. A more exact poetic equivalent might be found in Williams' disciple, Frank O'Hara, who began a poem about his feelings with "light, clarity, and avocado salad in the morning. . ." Adler has painted the avocados whole but, since he studies painting in Mexico, we might expect to soon see a great guacamole. (Ingber, *April 30-May 28*)

William Zimmer

Kermit Adler, Tomatoes, 1977. *Watercolor on paper, 22 x 31". Courtesy Ingber Gallery.*



FRANK PAGNATO

From his early days at Cooper Union where he studied drawing and painting and used tones of raw umber and white for his nude oil studies to his present exhibition at the Green Mountain Gallery, Frank Pagnato remains fascinated by fading, old, or monochromatic colors. Degas' *Portrait of Eve Yves,* painted in tones of brown with only one small patch of green coming through a window, is a constant source of inspiration for him. "Which is more appealing," he asks, "a rainbow with its spectrum of bright colors, or the fading colors of old costumes?"

His present exhibition of oils, at any rate, reveals his partiality to the latter. His work also reveals an ingenious talent for being influenced by the best of great painters, like Titian, da Vinci, Rembrandt, Delacroix and Caravaggio, and by contemporaries such as Jasper Johns, Joe Brainard, Harriet Shorr, Janet Fish and Lucien Day. In his paintings Pagnato uses a minimal composition combined with painterly realism. Although his work is western and he himself is not concerned with eastern philosophies, the realism of his work strikes one as being Zen-like because of its sincerity and plain truthfulness.

His new series, "Nick's Place," is based on his father's reclusive, hermit-like existence in Highland, New York. Here Pagnato discovered the kind of material, color and composition that struck the proper chord for him. There was something there he could relate to and remember as an artist: remembrances of his father's secret tomato patch in a wooded clearing where nature reigned and wild fragrances emanated; remembrances of his own childhood, his rabbits, the goats, his father's gallons of red wine and the produce of his gardens; and the kitchen, the food so good, so fragrant, and so untampered with that they would all eat out of the same pot.

What did it matter if Papa Nick had no compulsion for tidiness? From his lack of need to create order came a marvelous clutter in which Pagnato perceived reality and truth. The artist setting up a still life could never have matched the natural weaving of a hermit's non-arrangements. Again, one is reminded of Zen. In a Zen-Buddhist monastary students are expected to be neat and tidy, with no clutter of possessions around them except the extravagant clutter of nature with its flora and fauna, woods and streams, beyond the monastary walls. They are taught non-attachment. They earnestly desire to be free. Nick's freedom took the form of using the things he needed to use, drinking his red wine, and letting be. Perhaps there was a natural order within that was not disturbed by an unmade bed.

Frank Pagnato, The Chair (Nick's Place), 1977. *Oil on canvas, 42 x 34".* *Courtesy Green Mountain Gallery.*

Thus we are soothed and pleased by the sight of the gentle pattern along the edge of the old blue mattress of *Nick's Bedroom,* the textured brown quilt, the rumpled gray blanket, and the dark overcoat thrown on for extra warmth. Rich in textural diversity, this large painting possesses an undercurrent of mystery and brooding. So indeed does *The Chair* (1977) and *The Tree* from the Central Park series of Pagnato's 1975 exhibition. In each of these paintings one senses the elegant matter life is composed of and the elements existing in it. The minimal composition of the chair is partly overrun by the turbulent disarray of blankets and old garments which emerges from the deep-toned impenetrable background. One feels the closeness of the subjects. The artist has painted them again and again, abstracting *The Chair* not from its forms but from its colors until it emerges as a forceful black and white picture which hangs beside the one in color in the gallery.

The same could be said of the four portraits. The subject's face, existing in one area of space, is juxtaposed against an arrangement of his kitchen utensils which occupies another area of the canvas. Sometimes the Face says, "Here I am in color and here is my Environment in black and white." And sometimes the Environment says, "Here I am in color and behind me is my Face in black and white." The kitchen utensils must have been an important part of Nick Pagnato's and his family's life. In another two-part picture painted in the two colors of ultramarine blue and black, a drapery hanging over a chair forms a semicircle around the top part of the canvas. It is dark, deep toned, and forms the entrance to a cave in which we see brightly lit treasures of the kitchen.

The artist has produced drawings of this environment also, working with felt-tipped pens on canvas. Here we have light and space. Some drawings border on the abstract. *Pots on Stove,* drawn mainly with the blue pen, has small, well placed touches of red and soft green. The pan in the foreground catches the eye first. It is solid, and suggestive of the fragrant family meals. Yet one's gaze is led away across the room to an opening into some other part of the house. These unusual drawings on canvas are positive in feeling, uninhibited and refreshing.

In the summer Pagnato leaves New York for Monhegan Island off the coast of Maine. Here he is sustained by the beauty of the turbulent sea, and turns to the wooded wilderness that flourishes on the island for the subject matter of his watercolors. Because of the nature of this medium his watercolors possess delicacy, and the pencil work coming through gives added dimension. Frank Pagnato has much technical skill and is therefore free to give expression to his deep love of earth and sky and trees. Just as the oils have the feel and smell of Nick Pagnato, so do these watercolors have the feel and smell of nature. (Green Mountain, *September 16-October 6)*

Eileen Cramer

IDELLE WEBER

STUFFED CLAMS
IMPORTED
Heineken
IMPORTED
Heineken
IMPORTED
Heineken

MANNY FARBER

He used to be big shot," is the final line of *The Roaring Twenties,* a movie that is a sentimental favorite of painter/film critic Manny Farber. This line does not categorically reflect Farber's accomplishments in the critical and art worlds but does evoke the standard used to measure the success of an artist's new work: his past. One can say of Farber, "he used to be an Abstract Expressionist," "he used to be an auteur film critic," "he used to be the sternest judge of movies, painting, and literature practicing," and indeed, Farber has been all those things and more.

Yet the point of Farber's newest paintings is not their relation to his past; it is the sense in which they provoke so many issues—of painting, films, and criticism—cheerfully devoid of the complacency of art that singlemindedly reduces itself to being about one thing. Their subject is the commonplace objects of still life and pop genres but his treatment is never cool, detached, falsely celebratory, ironic, or documentary. They don't particularly address the materials of oil and paper of which they're composed. They're not about only one thing or one idea, and they don't limit their address to the initiated. In short, they have little in common with Abstract Expressionism, Pop, new realism, process art, or minimalism.

The objects in his paintings are scattered across a surface that could be a tabletop, a floor, or even the surface of one of Farber's Kraft-paper paintings of the early '70s. The notion that Farber's assorted candy bars, stationery supplies, and movie icons are arranged on top of past work is at the same time corny and tough. Summoning up old work is corny, but layering new objective works on the face of their abstract predecessors relegates the old work to the background (like a subconscious) while experimenting with the new, conscious, mode in the foreground.

The paintings on exhibit are divided into the American Candy series, the Stationery series, and the Auteur series. The candy and the stationery genres could be called "kinetic life" because his rendering of listo leads. Milk Duds, Bugler tobacco, and Bremner saltines are energetic, agitated—never frozen into a still-life recording of what's there. These things are half-eaten, half-used, and look as though Farber tossed them out to inspect items he eats or uses for artmaking. But these are more than close scrutiny of elements constituting the quality of American industry and packaging: they are objects Farber casts in a painting drama, the intrigue of the commonplace.

The most extraordinary intrigue in Farber's Stationery series is *The Red Can, The Push Pin, The White Label.* Movie critical jargon seems appropriate in reference to this work because this "frame" is like a still with the expectation that something will happen in the next frame. His point of view is high-angle, and he decentralizes his frame by activating its edges with this intrigue. He plays a gravity trick here by upending the tobacco packages, an eraser, and a Scotch-tape dispenser so his labels can lean on them in repose.

The journal aspect of his paintings is most successfully brought to view in his Auteur series which are paintings dealing with some of his favorite movie directors—Fassbinder, Altman, and Sturges, to name a few. It is very daring ground for a critic to visually confront images and ideas he's championed in words. The potential for hypocrisy is great, but he takes on—simultaneously—the two different realms he operates in as painter and critic.

Farber wrote in 1968: "The smart people in films—Satyajit Ray, Godard, Warhol, George Kuchar. . .realize that the scene today is one of Clutter and the problem is in finding the disarray technique to fit." His 1977 painting, *A Dandy's Gesture: The Films of Howard Hawks,* is about a disarray technique with which to conduct a discourse on fifteen Hawks movies. A Baedeker on touring this painting might begin with a jeep, from *Hatari,* motoring off the frame and situated above an Oh Henry! candybar Farber rewords to read "Oh David!" plus Rosalind Russell's persistent wail to Cary Grant in *His Girl Friday.* A racecar below the bar (from *The Crowd Roars* and *Red Line 7000*) vrooms into a Fed Mart (California's discount chain) newsletter, the masthead of which has been defaced by a Carr's biscuit and an "s" from a Hershey bar to read "Ed Mars" (the casino owner in Hawks' *The Big Sleep*). On the newsletter are the boat from *To Have And Have Not,* the dinosaur skeleton from *Bringing Up Baby,* an elephant from *Hatari!,* Paul Muni's *Scarface* fedora, and two portraits of hawks (the birds) to remind us of Hawks (the director). Connecting the lower half of the painting with the upper is a vertical railroad track from *Twentieth Century* which also reads as reference to the tracking shot of movies and a formal move he employs to unify the painting. Off the track to the right is an airplane from *Only Angels Have Wings,* which suffers a collision with the Barranca mountain of a Cup-of-Gold. A horse from *Red River,* Russell's newspaperman hat and suit-jacket from *His Girl Friday,* a dismembered digit from *The Big Sky,* and George Raft's *Scarface* quarter-trick finish the painting.

Farber's disarray technique is about—simultaneously—homage, recollection, criticism, formalist moves, and rebus. Rebuses are comprised of many elements which signify words and sounds and which are added and subtacted to an ultimate payoff or piece of wisdom.

His rebus-like amalgams are positivist: assured, agressive assemblies of observation. Their garrulousness is about actual objects or movie scenes far from the private spaces of action paintings or minimalism. The arresting quality of this work is that the individual paintings are at once abrasive, corny, didactic, empirical, and entertaining. If there were a textbook on Farber's positivist spaces, it would read: "There are several ways Farber deploys space, the three most important being the area of experience and assertion the objects stress, the scatter and liveliness of their disarray and relational tensions, and the commitment to creating a space involved with objects at a variety of emotional and intellectual levels which never disengages itself from the chaos of the world in which they are embedded." (O.K. Harris, *May 28-June 18*)

Manny Farber, A Dandy's Gesture: The Films of Howard Hawks, 1977. *Courtesy O.K. Harris Gallery.*

Carrie Rickey

RICHARD CHILDERS

Throbbing surfaces of multi-layered color constitute the idiom of Richard Childers' most recent paintings. His consistent involvement with overlays of dripped, thrown, splattered, sponged, and brushed paint now culminate in complex kinetic fields. Multitudinous rivulets of color emanate from specific yet not easily determinable sources.

Staring at the origin points of activity, one becomes intensely aware of the variables accomplished by Childers' tight control over space and somewhat freer establishment of rhythm. The disciplined approach appears to contradict the feverish pace with which he applies paint to canvas. At times he uses a rack to suspend a painting off the floor or from the ceiling, now and then tilting it to achieve certain pathways of color. Otherwise, he paints onto canvas tacked to the wall or extended on the floor, either approach reminiscent of the technique if not the ideology of Abstract Expressionism. His work involves a combination of intuitive reasoning with spontaneous painting.

The convergence of strategic energy areas forces a mysterious but intense perceptual tension. Abstract forms advance with surprising aggression, the result of a strict control over layering the painted surfaces. Points of concentrated energy gain their force partly by accident, at least to the extent that Childers permits the rhythm invoked by the development of each work to dictate some of its direction. Rather than site kinetic focal points—as Childers did in some earlier energy paintings that appeared like atomic bursts of color or fireworks exploding against contrasting backgrounds—he currently watches forms take shape as each work progresses, then plays upon the suggested centers of activity. Schemes are not so carefully plotted as before, but neither does he try any longer to arrange a system by brushing final surface details over a background or field.

Childers sustains tension by allowing nuances of color to break through the multi-hued surfaces. The paintings permit no painterly reading but rather consist of totally filled spaces that suggest mazes as the eye wanders from one source of vitality to the next. Areas within the paintings appear to shift, though in reality they remain constant and recall the mouths of rivers or streams. The illusion of their moving comprises part of the paintings' kineticism, a conglomerate effect accomplished by perhaps thirty to forty colors in a single canvas. The additive quality of the colors deals less with texture than vitality as hues merge into a complex opticality that precludes any long-term concentration of the eye on a single area without experiencing a blurring sensation.

How much the profusion of abstract configurations within each painting appear to move back and forth, or in and out, depends on the build-up of color. The larger the canvas (some measure 9 by 12 feet or greater), the more essential it becomes that adequate distance be maintained between painting and viewer. These paintings must be read as totals rather than parts, since the tension becomes dissipated or fragmented if one follows the temptation to pursue an interest in what appear to be detectable components.

As Childers has become more involved with the subtleties rather than blatant character of kineticism, he has abandoned some of the brighter or airier colors of earlier work. Nor does he depend now on black and white to attain greater optical contrasts. Nothing is shocking, yet the paintings are more often disconcerting than pleasant. Colors have become increasingly darker in tone, richer in value. Violets and browns, deep blues and greens appear more frequently. Pink and yellow recur at intervals but serve less to set a mood than to heighten a painting's potential changeability in the different contexts of day and night, natural and incandescent lighting.

Until 1974, Childers' energy paintings relied heavily on optical illusion. Poured vertical arrangements led to the introduction of chevron shapes that created a definite vertical scheme. The chevron paintings led briefly to freestanding laminated plywood sculptures with comparable patterns, labeled "Energy Sticks" by Childers. By 1976 Childers returned to painting on canvas, ridding the surfaces of recognizably brushed images or forms, retaining a concern with energy but on a more sophisticated and subtle expressive level. No longer interested in refracting light, he now occasionally achieves a feathery look; at other times he forces the viewer to search a vastly complex field of swirling colors.

Titling his works with numerical, time, or multiple systems, Childers explores the vast potential of readings inherent within the confined space of one canvas. Newest works, with the "Divide" and multiplication titles, suggest more structural content than actually exists. The additive or subtractive system fails to predominate in a scheme that deals primarily with perceptual concerns about how painted space can move, and how it can trick the viewer into believing it is either more or less than meets the eye. (Image South, Atlanta, *May 28-June 25*)

Janet Kutner

Richard Childers, One Hundred and One Times Seven Equals Seven Hundred and Seven, 1977. *Acrylic on canvas, 9½ x 12'. Courtesy Image South Gallery.*

EDVINS STRAUTMANIS

Edvins Strautmanis' painting in the past five years has been a continual exploration of several aspects of monumental field painting. The range of his concerns extends from an extremely free and energetic rhythmic swipes of broad paintstrokes in an "open" spatial field formed by the underlying background to an involvement with a thick, crusty skin-like surface with complicated texturings of reticulations and cracks. Strautmanis seems absorbed by the material possibilities of paint itself, now using it as a limber, fluid medium which appears to extend itself through "painterly" space and another time resting as a solid, dense stable layer on the canvas.

Despite this interest in the physical states of the medium (acrylic), Strautmanis is not strictly a "matiere" painter. He has a gestural vocabulary that is forcefully vigorous and yet graceful, and in this respect his "Schmiermalerei" seeks to cultivate the very kinds of serpentine rhythmic felicities of stroke which de Kooning is always at such pains to repress in his own work. Nor are the gestural paintings of 1972, such as *Penguin's Surprise*, devoted to the tasty mannerisms that undid Alfred Leslie's last cosmetically abstract phase about 1960. Strautmanis' work has about it an exhilarating openness and big rangy scale that is very much like the man himself; his gestural painting is not afraid of direct feeling and even sentiment, since the focus of this kind of emotion in his art is upon questions of pure painting themselves.

This is why, I believe, in Strautmanis' drawings (bold oil stick broad drawings on large sheets) elements of the figure appear and fade out at different periods and the artist himself never expresses special concern or interest in this intermittent figuralism; the question of "image" is irrelevant: if a head, hand, or nude flow off the sweeping movements of the crayon, then they have come to exist out of that process itself and are not really studies from the figure in the usual sense. They simply come into being (and disappear) in the movement and moment that is the making of the drawing.

There is a current of structuralist interest in some groups of Strautmanis' paintings from 1974 and 1975 in which the broad swipes that snake through space in the gestural works tend to a regularization, becoming oriented vertically and horizontally, as though to set up a series of relationships with the format of the canvas and its edges. In *Blue Purple* (1974) brash vertical strokes are across, in front of, and atop an underlayment of similar but horizontal strokes. It is a kind of very loose painterly equivalent of the schema of a grid, saving that the viscosity of the pigment expresses the directional activity of the painting movement. Whether the composition is asymmetrical and extremely active or more stabilized and regular with parallel strokes in opposing directions, these kinds of pictures retain their character as paintings about the actual and the apparent activity and equipoise of the material itself.

In the "skin" or crusted paintings such as *Calypso* (1975) and *Stand Clear* of the same year, the gestural actions are absent. Instead, the paint seems to have been applied in lava-like flows, dropped on in spatters, or applied in daubs. With its drying and manipulation, the skins and layers separate and reveal other ones beneath. The dabbed-on colors suggest lunar or martian spatter patterns in the terrain of the pictures, which themselves appear to be rectangular segments of a field of relief and color activity one can imagine extending infinitely from all sides of the canvas. The surfaces of these pictures is often matte or leathery, whereas the more gestural works have that fatness and juiciness associated with "painterly" painting. This duller surface of the crust or skin-like works assists in defining their different character. In them the active event of the paint does not appear still to be occurring. If something seems to have "caused" the way the picture looks, it is a very slow process, like that of time itself, or has happened and been concluded some time previously. The crusts or skins are inactive concretions of the painter's medium, not swirling trails of paint from the dance of his hand. In some of the "concretion" paintings Strautmanis uses metallic pigments which, with their suggestion of dense glittery metal that was once molten, also make reference to a past, already concluded process involving change of physical state.

Edvins Strautmanis, Blue Purple, 1974. *Acrylic on canvas, 96 x 66". Courtesy Allan Stone Gallery.*

While the modes of Strautmanis' paintings may seem to be classifiable as either active or static, many works occupy points somewhere between those extremes. The artist is dedicated to exploring each gradation of this spectrum of the physicality of the medium.

In addition, Strautmanis' color deserves particular consideration. It too is modulated according to the nature of each painting statement, so that the highly active strokes are frequently light and hot, and the more static, more deliberately structured ones appear to favor a darker, but very resonant palette.

In fact the spiritual content of Strautmanis' paintings is stated primarily by his color usage. His color is so reverberating and tart that despite the kinesthetic excitement of the gestural paintings or the texturological histories embodied in the skins and crusts, the emotional content of Strautmanis' work is the exalted range of feeling from sensuous ecstasy to meditative gravity of an almost mystical sort. It is the transcending intensity of the kind of feeling, directed at the nature of artistic experience itself, which is the content and subject of his art. What is so impressive and even overwhelming about the body of his work is that, for him, a monumental mural scale is his mode, even his vernacular. His work is devoid of swagger and bombast. Strautmanis' painting has a genuine easy largeness of spirit and an unaffected nobility and greatness.

Dennis Adrian

HELEN SOREFF

Helen Soreff's Minimal-like paintings and drawings shown recently at the Bertha Urdang Gallery formed a peculiarly successful one-woman show. The economical tensive line drawings came first for her and also help the viewer comprehend the spare but rorschach-rich spaces which permeate the "secret formula" surfaces of her decidedly mature paintings.

Of the four paintings exhibited, two turn from gray-matte asbestos to silver (depending on how you move). It's fair and not too laudatory to call the brown in the other two "unknown brown." Surfaces of both types are monochrome, modeled, drawn on; sometimes black underpainting is used, giving these surfaces a worm-hole-in-space effect. This makes an already singular treatment of space a further curiosity, a subtle capping off of the experience. She is a thorough painter.

Soreff's work has matured within the so-called New York school wherein the participatory contract between abstract painter and supersophisticated viewer forms a perceptual dynamic so highly developed that it's not unusual to see the painter giving vigilant attentiveness to such a range of perceptual possibilities, even conceptual whims, of the viewer that the enterprise borders on becoming a science. At its best such painting not only anticipates the viewer, it surprises him.

Soreff surprises me, especially with the gray-silver paintings, so sensitive to the potential momentums of the viewer's mind and recent painting. Treading the line between less-is-more and the rest of the painting world, she constructs separate, perceptual sets that can be read out of the same composition and roughly share the same visual axis. These perceptual sets, taken as possible, albeit nonmandatory series, assume a subtle primacy over the single constellation type composition of the painted surface, i.e., her paintings are only ostensibly about monochrome stripes.

The stripe composition certainly functions as a *ding an sich;* however, it also serves as both a point of departure and a point of return. The point changes upon each return. One sees this in the large stripe color-field paintings by Kenneth Noland. The explicit power of the Noland stripes allows for less rereading than the lambent Soreff work, perhaps in the same way that Shakespeare's *Henry V* allows for less "rereading" than Hamlet. With the Soreff work the point of departure itself is somewhat altered with each return.

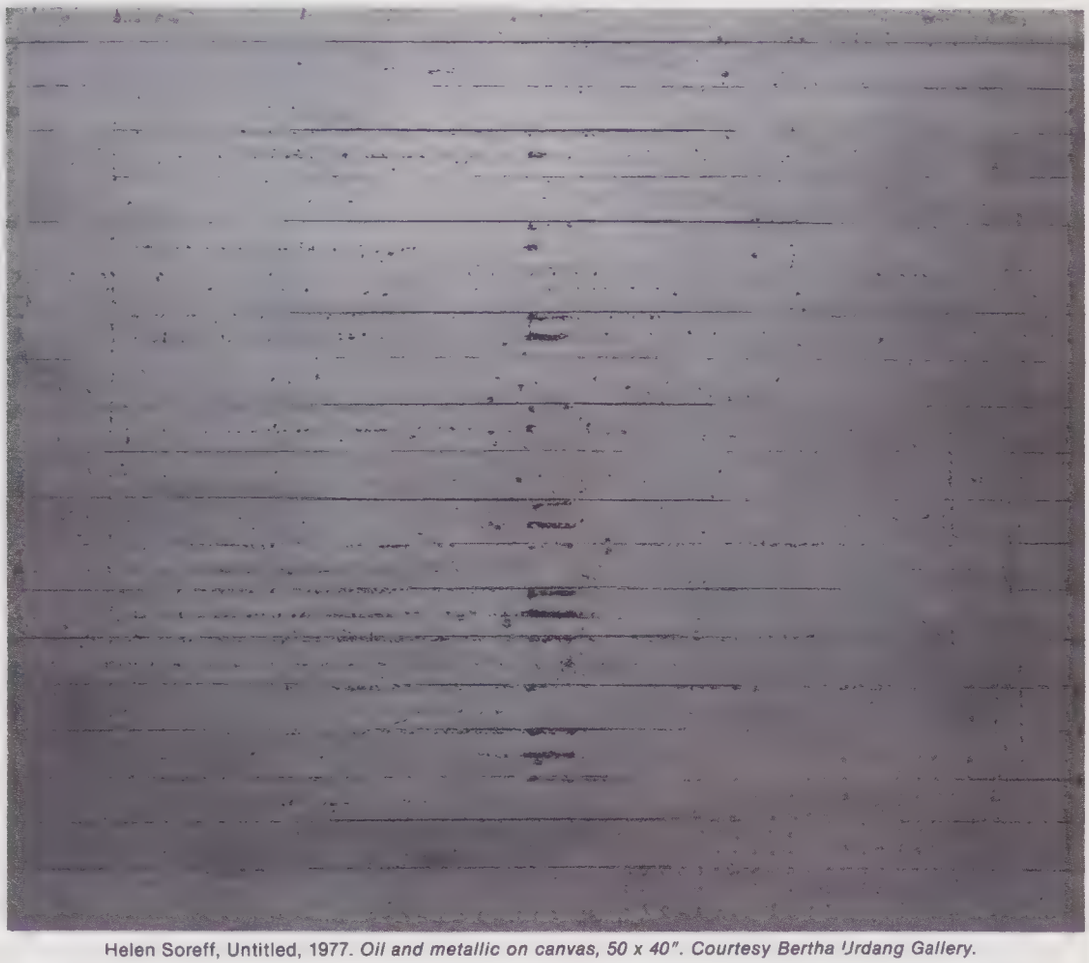
Pursuant to perceptual sets, artistic equivalents to the Copernican reversal and to what Kant called his own Copernican reversal in Philosophy may not have come with Renaissance perspective, perhaps not even fully with Cézanne and Cubism. In our own times New York painters have been working with far more than the now rudimentary, Hofmann-spawned (or Hofmannesque) ideas of push-pull, working with problems which have evolved from Cubism, but remarkably, reversed, thereby throwing responsibility for selecting separate visual motifs upon the viewer, rather than spelling it out in what finally becomes (for Cubism) a one time integer. This Cubist reversal itself, something quite akin to typological thought, mandates a certain amount of simplicity. If not, the task of making a painting "work" would overharmonize the quasi-hidden separate movements.

In the New York manner, it has become a tradition to present various sub-illusions and persona changes within one pictorial grid, although not conspicuously but readily available to the viewer. One sees first the painting (ostensible composition), then the painting within the painting, and finally, the second painting within the painting as it moves scarcely detectable in slow motion with the chemical necessity of an August cloud, to once again become something like but far more complex that the initial gestalt.

Where does Helen Soreff stand in this tradition? Plenty of strictly Minimal work awarded the eye, but structurewise it sent our different minds down the same path. The path appears to be a one way trip to infinity. Such mind trips = end of reason and imagination = the sublime (a word recuperated by Barnett Newman). This sublime aesthetic appears to have dominated much of Minimal art. Helen Soreff's work is close to this sublime of recent tradition but is more dynamic. Her paintings are typified by an initial, misleading simplicity which reminds one of the late Ad Reinhardt. The virtuoso similar "secret" paint recipe also recalls Reinhardt.

She is close to the Minimalist sublime but appears to be moving cautiously toward the beautiful. In this respect her work has more to do with pleasure than with Zen-like instruction. Granted the pleasure is somewhat cerebral, but luscious. Perhaps, one senses the polar presence of the beautiful not only because *return* is part of the aesthetic but because of the very organic richness of the return; Soreff's paintings are organically rich and she is moving toward the beautiful on the wings of a great speckled bird. I admire the work because it gives me pleasure. (Bertha Urdang, *through April 23*)

John McClurg



Helen Soreff, Untitled, 1977. *Oil and metallic on canvas, 50 x 40". Courtesy Bertha Urdang Gallery.*

CALIFORNIA: THE MODERN ERA

Painting and Sculpture in California: The Modern Era," which originated at the San Francisco Museum of Art, is now at the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington, D.C. for its only East Coast showing. To distill over three-quarters of a century of modern California art into a single exhibition requires rigorous selectivity, but even in the pared-down and revised NCFA version, the sheer number of works of art—some 270 by 199 artists—tends to be overwhelming. In a desire to present a comprehensive survey of a relatively neglected body of art, The Modern Era sometimes sacrifices coherence for quantity. Aside from offering the obvious message that California has nurtured its fair share of artists (of varying capabilities), The Modern Era is less cogent in defining what is unique to California art.

One of these distinguishing characteristics, especially recognizable in the early decades of the century, is the importance of the physical environment on both subject matter and style. The most accomplished West Coast artists of the early years—Gottardo Piazzoni, Maynard Dixon, and Clayton Price—were landscape painters. While stylistically individual—Piazzoni, influenced by Whistler and Oriental painting, employs flat, mistily brushed, broad regions of light-drenched, subdued hues; Dixon, in Hodleresque fashion, uses parched, harshly colored, bold irregular forms; and Price interlocks dense, savagely stroked blocks of gritty color—each seems hardly touched by the contemporary artistic revolution, namely Cubism, which was sweeping Europe and beginning to penetrate New York. But Cubism, particularly in its pioneering years, was a stylistic vocabulary which appeared best suited to purely formal investigations and especially to urban themes. To Californians, in particular those working in the North, the variety and vitality of the landscape, not the dynamism and pandemonium of the urbanesque, provided the richest subject matter; consequently, stylistic influences were restricted to 19th century landscape models with occasional inspiration from the contemporary formal developments in Fauvism and Expressionism.

This landscape impulse is most significant in the North, where nature exerts powerful pressure on the visual environment (consider the hills of the Bay Area). The art of Richard Diebenkorn, among the best in the show, while revealing a number of artistic influences—Matisse, Hopper, de Kooning—also contains a pictorial armature based on the countours and silhouettes of Northern California's hills and bays. In addition, the scabrous surfaces of some of his works from the Forties through the Sixties suggest the tactility of Bay Area terrain. However, Diebenkorn's shift from expressionist surfaces to a smoother finish in the 1970s Ocean Park series, while reflective of a general alteration of sensibility in postwar American art, also has roots in Diebenkorn's own move to the more light-filled, meteorologically tranquil environment of Southern California.

Diebenkorn's development points up the dual nature of West Coast art and, in the exhibition, distinctions between Northern and Southern California are validly drawn. While the topography of nature dominates in the North, the imprint of man's construction molds the South. In Los Angeles and its environs, a flatter terrain and a predictable even-tempered climate result in an environment defined less through nature's variations and more through man's conscious physical impositions. Consequently, art of a more autonomously contructional quality and art injected with potent doses of fantasy (which characterizes much of L.A. architecture) is more common in the South. Early manifestations of this phenomenon emerge in the work of two disparate individuals—Stanton MacDonald-Wright and Simon Rodia. Although developed in the early-teens European atmosphere of investigation into the formal and synesthetic properties of color, Wright's Synchromism, which he brought to L.A. as a teacher at the Art Students League in the 1920s, augured explorations of color, light, and form which preoccupied a number of Southern California artists. In the 1930s and '40s, artists such as Oskar Fischinger, a film-maker who arrived in Hollywood in the Thirties from Germany, painted elegant, somewhat constructivist, chromatic abstractions, and Helen Lundeberg, Lorser Feitelson, and John McLaughlin pioneered a hard-edged style of remarkable severity and laconism. Clean-surfaced presentations of color and light continue to inform much recent Southern California art—among these are Larry Bell's vitrified color cubes, Craig Kaufmann's lozenge-shaped plexiglass reliefs, and Robert Irwin's nearly evanescent environments of light.

Common to these contemporary works is the utilization of unconventional and synthetic materials. Synthetics (like the logos uttered in the California-based film, *The Graduate*—"plastics") carry a number of associations: the raw material of America's consumer culture and prefabricated architecture epitomized by the L.A. life-style and environment (home of Hollywood and Disneyland), and the sophistication of technology and its potential for expanding and intensifying perceptual phenomena. Moreover, the willingness to employ unusual materials harks back to Simon Rodia's use of junk in the construction of an ultimate architectural fantasy—the Watts Towers.

Assemblage, moreover, points up that from the mid-Fifties on, the North-South California dichotomy has become less rigid. Significant works of assemblage emerged in both locales, from the scatalogical, mixed-media constructions of Ed Kienholz and Wallace Berman in the South to the grotesque, shrouded conglomerations of Bruce Connor and the glittery, fantasy-combines of Robert Hudson (part of what has been dubbed "Funk Art") in the North. United in its freewheeling form and its frequent adoption of extreme social and political positions, West Coast assemblage is distinguishable from that of the East which is far tamer and more preoccupied with formal artistic concerns. In addition, Connor's bleak visions, with their anguished inferences and narcotic allusions, indicate roots in the beat culture, which flourished most forcefully in the Bay Area. Furthermore, assemblage has sources in an Abstract-Expressionist aesthetic of environment consciousness and liberated physical means (also related in part to beat culture), and San Francisco fostered a number of Abstract-Expressionist artists such as Ernest Briggs, Hassel Smith, Edward Corbett, Edward Dugmore, and of course, Clyfford Still—all of whose work has a raw power which, on occasion, rivals that of the New York School.

Related to an art of untraditional material and encouraged in part by contact with Mexican, American Indian, and Oriental crafts, the ceramic movement became another of the West Coast's major creative expressions. Its originator, Peter Voulkos, initially working out of San Francisco, fired abstract clay sculpture with lumpy surfaces like an expressionist painting. As the movement spread, ceramicists Ken Price, Robert Arneson, and Richard Shaw employed a Pop and sometimes Surrealist iconography. Pop culture's increasing incursion into the contempory environment is attested to in Photo-Realism, whose most accomplished West Coast practitioners, Robert Bechtle and Ralph Goings, work in Northern California, but portray the man-made enviroment of the ersatz rural housing complex, the shopping center, and strip architecture which one tends to associate with L.A. San Francisco's distinctive physical terrain loses a battle of survival against man's constructions, and even when Northern artists, such as Bill Martin and Gage Taylor, focus their super-realist vision on California's remaining wilderness, they create paintings suggestive of illustrations on record-jacket and paper-back book covers. In a world in which a commodity mentality operates with a vengeance, it is hardly surprising that an ostensibly anti-object art, which fuses extremism and environment consciousness—namely Conceptualism—would find comfort in the California atmosphere. (NCFA, through *September 11*)

Gerald D. Silk

JAMES ADLEY

The following flirts with being an afterthought, so it should be stated at the outset: some of James Adley's paintings are as big as Texas—but they are not experienced as being overwhelming. There are reasons for this. On one hand, the abstract elements such as long gashes are not placed so that they skim the edges of the painting nor do they point to the corners to signal that this is a big object. On the other hand, there are no clashes or skirmishes among the elements. We're not witnessing battle scenes, but rather lyrical flow. Small may be beautiful, but large experienced as small is provocative.

With scale on the back burner, we are caught in what is happening on the surface. Adley has an assortment of over fifty implements with which he applies paint. A lot of these tools preordain grids. There are garden tools such as rakes, there are tamps that stamp out rectangles and screens that produce hide-like patterning. There is evidence of a fertilizing machine at work, an implement with a row of ducts that emit parallel lines, with each line ending in a thicker droplet. Adley takes the mission of field painter seriously as he cultivates his acreage.

Adley's diverse biography is awash in A's. I have already posited him as a sort of agronomist, and his *curriculum vitae* lists training in accounting and astronomy in addition to all the disciplines falling under the rubric of art. He is British, but received an MFA from the University of Pennsylvania and currently teaches at Michigan State. With his training it is logical that system should be the basis of his approach. Adley has written: "system is subject to every evasion, even obscured, but never totally rejected—lush beauty is being courted." It is the underpinnings of system that keep the Grand Total at bay. The accountant's method seems to be applied. A careful tending of each element contributing to the whole means that the resultant size won't be held in awe. The paintings earn their size.

So, like the two sides of character Tolstoy revealed in *Anna Karenina,* Adley is at once the pragmatic farmer concerned with experimentation to get greater yield as well as the romantic. How does he court beauty? Mostly through color. He uses housepaint and must mix his hues, but his colors are not so arcane that they wouldn't be on the Benjamin Moore chart. His color is pleasing yet Adley doesn't jump in with both feet in his wooing of beauty. The cautious swain, his colors are neither bold nor perfumey. He will compose a painting entirely of blues or one that is totally pinkish. These intimate colors tend to decrease the impression of size. In his color scheme and in his sense of caprice, Adley seems to have been influenced by Paul Klee. But Spanish elements also creep in; *Star Tide,* for instance, has small yellow discs in it reminiscent of Miró. In his striations, Adley reminds one of Tapies.

Adley's current exhibition is in two parts. For two weeks the "monumental" paintings will be shown, followed by those paintings that are merely "large." These smaller paintings are more quickly apprehended and don't need to be scanned. In some of these, there are pools where paint has dried and cracked forming a natural grid network; this endows the paintings with a landscape-like topography. This is especially true with *Brown.* (A word about Adley's titles. He is the type of painter for whom *Untitled* would be a good title. Like an accountant he usually numbers his paintings sequentially.)

Adley also makes very small drawings which he keeps in a ring binder. They are very intelligent doodling; you can suppose him flushed with an idea as he works out on a Fortran computer form or on a sheet of university stationery. These small drawings reveal him to be dreaming of Agnes Martin. The form these drawings often take is blocks of hatched lines. These lines look like hexagrams yielded from consulting the *I Ching,* something befitting a passionate astronomer.

In analyzing Adley's paintings to assert that size doesn't matter, I have often felt myself engaging in circumlocution. Of course, size is the ground of these paintings' being. Like Everest it is there. That it seems not to be is a tribute to the painter's equivalent of circumlocution and is quite an accomplished legerdemain. (Neill, *September 6-October 1*)

William Zimmer

James Adley, 93 #4, 1974. *Acrylic on canvas, 110 x 90". Courtesy Neill Gallery.*

CE ROSER

Ce Roser, Square Sun I, 1977. *Oil on canvas, 50 x 72". Courtesy Ingber Gallery.*

The latest paintings of Ce Roser, with their ever bolder yet more delicate rhythms and colors (including a freer use of the background white of the primed canvas as a color in itself), are a spontaneous accomplishment of spirit. She has said that the increased use of white in her paintings is a translation of sunlight on the Hudson that she sees from her studio windows. But rather than the empty, unvariegated glare of the river's surface in winter or the drowsy unfeatured glitter it presents in summer, which objects moving across seem only to interrupt, there is a gentle, playful participation of this painted light among what have become its fellow colors. The delicate yet firm bands of color, like the vivid adumbration of a rainbow, the delightful vegetation of the greens and other plant colors, the abstract clusters of purplish cubes from which spring banded hues like the painted flight-trail of flushed, invisible birds, the dancing, leaping rhythms which are to be seen everywhere in her work, make the word 'joyous' seem apropos of this painter. Her imagery is not preconceived, but develops organically from within the process of painting. No ideas but those from the work itself; thus, the Square Sun Series was not done from an idea or 'concept' which does not allow the work to share in its own coming into being, but became evident only after it had been created. The title is more of an identification affixed after the fact; similarly, the squares, rectangles, or bands of yellow and/or orange that signify the sun are a kind of leitmotif, or like bits of confetti scattered by celebrants, spontaneously generated by the deeper working out of rhythms. It is a process based on feelings rather than preconceived ideas, and thus makes for more than superficial differences from painting to painting, a variety nicely echoed in the choice of paper, canvas, and cloth as materials in this show. The oil painting *Phases of The Sun* and the *Square Sun* tapestry might almost be by two different artists and in a sense are, within the ambit of a unified sensibility.

The French poet Francis Ponge stated that part of the pleasure that an art work gives us is its 'organic-ness' in the simplest sense: either by its rhythm or contours it reminds us of our own bodies, our own rhythms, the rounded completeness and necessity of each of our organs. Such pleasure is part of that which Roser's work gives us.

Roser: "One creates the painting and also the time in which to paint. My life is a constant observation of color, form, texture and movement. A studio on the Hudson River results in images from the river, the park, the fireworks, the ships appearing in my paintings. Fleeting, ambiguous, creative sparks become concrete when grasped and retained in memory. They become paintings."

In a series of preparatory washes done for her *Walk-Through Triangle* (which appeared in New York's Battery and Central Parks with the work of several other women artists a few summers ago), colors softly mingle with and spread among each other in a sort of gentle chaos before creation, like players that socialize backstage before going on in their differentiated roles.

Ce Roser studied with the Japanese calligrapher Hidai during his visit to New York a number of years ago. Her Paperworks, a series done on mulberry paper and employing more relaxed, larger, and less deliberate brushstrokes, merge with calligraphy in an area where the abstract rendering of a character becomes a revelation of sensibility, but her sources do not lie in Oriental art. It is rather a meeting of similar aesthetic concerns. Peter Townsend has said that these works seem "Oriental only to those who don't know Oriental art."

This rapprochement of East and West is also reflected in a certain valued tentative, awkward, even childish quality in Roser's work. To one of his students who worried about not being sufficiently in control of this free-association calligraphy that could not be corrected or polished, that valued spontaneity above conscious skill, Hidai said in his basic English: "Clumsy is better." A more precise derivation of the Paperworks might be found in Hidai's practice of having his students work on floor-length expanses of paper with big brushes and buckets of paint. Both in their size and in the fact of their being painted on paper laid out on the floor, the Paperworks seem a resurfacing of the memory of Hidai's night classes.

In the painting *Strange Dawn,* shown in an earlier exhibit, soft purple and red bands of cloud with wispy atmospheric fuzz curve over a green egg-shaped sun being born from the horizon. There is also a feeling of nature aware of itself (as if the clouds knew we were looking at them, or knew what they were) in *Dreaming Algae,* where a kelp-like swirl or brown ribbon-weed of color curls in on itself in a mysterious blue sky of sea. In an untitled collage, a scrap of wrapping paper becomes a crane winging serenely toward a mossy Japanese rock garden. An abstract lavender patch seems transformed into a flight of butterflies in the watercolor *In My Garden Rocks Dream.*

Ce Roser has said that it is for others to say what tradition her work belongs to, surely a modest and, if 'tradition' is a term applied by critics after the fact of creation, an accurate statement. But she has spoken of the "intense, saturated" watercolors of Emil Nolde and of her feeling for Monet, "who transformed nature into paint." From Hans Uhlmann, the leading German sculptor whom she studied under at the Berlin Fine Arts Academy, she learned the importance of abstraction "not as something imposed on reality but drawn from it." Other contemporary influences in her life as an artist have been Charmion von Wiegand, with particular reference to the latter's collages, and Sari Dienes. For the viewer as for herself, her work is a world of feeling, curiously out in the open, vivid, lively, and daringly delicate. A world at play, it welcomes the fresh, sensitive eye. (Ingber, *May 31-June 25*)

Lane Dunlop

arts reviews

RICHARD DIEBENKORN	Knoedler
ANTHONY CARO	André Emmerich, Uptown
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MARC CHAGALL	Pierre Matisse
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TOKO SHINODA / ELIZA MOORE	Betty Parsons
MAURICE PRENDERGAST	Davis and Long

By NOEL FRACKMAN

Richard Diebenkorn, Ocean Park 96, 1977. *Oil on canvas, 93 x 85". Courtesy Knoedler.*

RICHARD DIEBENKORN

If anyone is going to be elected Poet Laureate of the beach, it ought to be Richard Diebenkorn. Of course these new additions to Diebenkorn's *Ocean Park* series are considerably more than beach paintings and they don't contain anything that could be denoted as recognizable subject matter. Yet these are the golden and grayish colors of the sands by the sea, this is the way images sometimes look when you have stared into the hot sun, here are the blues and greens of the ocean and the pinks and lavenders you might find in a seashell. The hazy, white heat you feel at the beach, the skin of atmospheric haze that sometimes hangs over the water, all these sensations are implied by Diebenkorn's paintings. As such, they are visceral paintings: you don't simply view them, you feel and sense them as well.

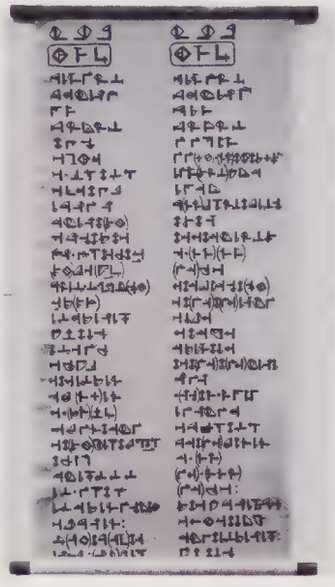
The mixed-media drawings are fractured into planes like shattered glass, the same directional fragments that are barely seen beneath the layers of light-filled, thinly applied colors that make up the larger canvases. The sensation of looking through panes of glass is especially vivid in the larger paintings; there is always the feeling of a spacious, open area, as if one were gazing through a large picture window out onto the beach. The transparency of the colors, the sense of luminosity, the scumbling—all add to the sensation of a view out to and through light; colors seem vaporous even when clearly defined by planes. The glowing *Ocean Park 102* was a special favorite; it compresses in one canvas all these commingling feelings and perceptions. (Knoedler, *May 7-June 2)*

ANTHONY CARO

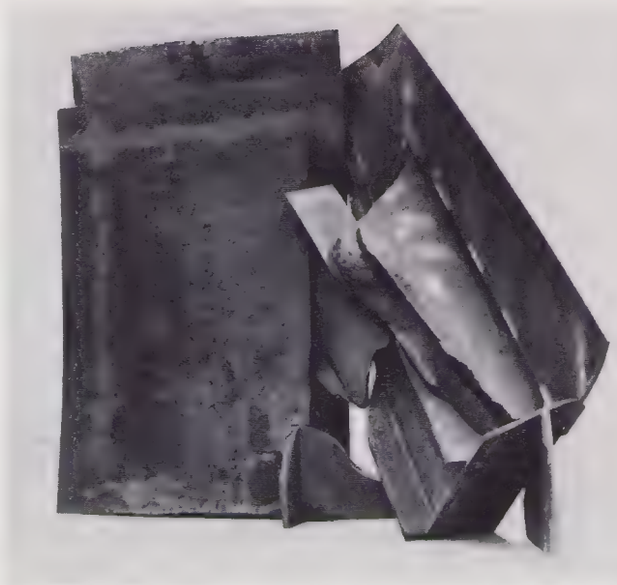
Promethean steel sculptures by Anthony Caro, so massive that they had to be hoisted in through the gallery windows, are creating a considerable stir among art lovers. They are clearly recognizable as familiar Caro images, that is, these sculptures maintain the horizontality, the welding and bolting, the use of industrial I-beams and scrap steel that characterize so much of Caro's work. Even the absence of painted color and the use of more naturally rusted or varnished steel surfaces is already a familiar idiom to those who have followed recent developments in Caro's work.

Yet there are highly significant changes in Caro's new pieces which have chiefly to do with shape. There are different kinds of shapes in these works, shapes more closely related to landscape forms, thus more eccentric and organic. Yet unlike Caro's much earlier organic sculptures of the 1950s which referred to the human body, these works relate to the terrain, to rock cliffs, to expanses of craggy shorelines, to looming, prehistoric dolmens. Because the shapes are so tautly juxtaposed in a tensile gathering of forms, the few empty spaces where light and air come through achieve an added significance. It is by virtue of these see-through spaces particularly that an awareness emerges of edges which are cut straight or appear torn, outlines which seem directional or eroded.

Because these more organic shapes are used in combination with recognizable elements of industrial steel, they are highly evocative. They seem to be discovered shapes, less a combination of pre-fixed materials which are at hand and more cumulative in the sense that the individually gathered shapes



Komar and Melamid, Scroll, 1976. *Acrylic on linen and wood, 70 x 31". Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts.*



Anthony Caro, India, 1976. *Steel rusted and varnished, 93 x 120 x 60". Courtesy André Emmerich Gallery.*

lead to the final iconography. The shapes cause the viewer to read segments of these steel sculptures as wood, stone, or slag. *Conspiracy* appears as if it might contain wood; the sharp planes of the steel beams in *Nectarine* form a shelter for what might be slabs of rock or stelae. In the monumental *India,* the steel suggests not only the earth from which it originates but also a sense of the awesomeness of this nature-man-created material in relationship to its service to man; truly a sense of the historicity of steel. (André Emmerich, Uptown, *April 30-May 21*)

VITALY KOMAR / ALEXANDER MELAMID

The Moscow artists Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid are once again showing their ironic works. The content of the exhibition is varied—in part Dada spoof and in part sharp social criticism. In *A Catalogue of Superobjects—Supercomfort for Superpeople,* Komar and Melamid have devised zany Rube Goldberg devices which they have then had photographed on their friends. The idea is that since the destruction of social hierarchy has taken place, there is a need now for objects of Supercomfort intended for the "Ruling Elite," objects which will cause this elite group to be immediately distinguishable and distinguished. One category of objects, called "Prestigeants," includes a stage or pedestal which will "free you from the foolish scramble up the ladder of success." Other objects include an amplifier of the sixth sense, a "body-earthflower" (worn on the head) to unite you with nature.

Farewell to Russia was a performance piece of black magic in which the artists engaged in a ritual exorcism of their attachment to Russia, as symbolized by icons, by piercing photographs of icons with a knitting needle. The performance also involved hacking the photo-icons with an ax and reciting incantations. In *TransState,* Komar and Melamid have literally constructed a new political state complete with a Constitution, passports, currency, a border post (of wood with black and white stripes), and a Declaration of Independence. Some works here are spoofs on art itself. The *Cut-Off-Corner-Series* shows five paintings in totally different styles; in each, the upper-left-hand corner is cut off. Thus due to the characteristic cut-off corner, the "anti-individual" style of the artist can always be recognized, no matter what style he chooses to work in. There are many other Komar/Melamid creations here including a scroll inscribed with the Aruoist language which the artists invented. As a whole, the show is sharply satirical and the wit is biting. (Ronald Feldman, *May 14-June 30*)

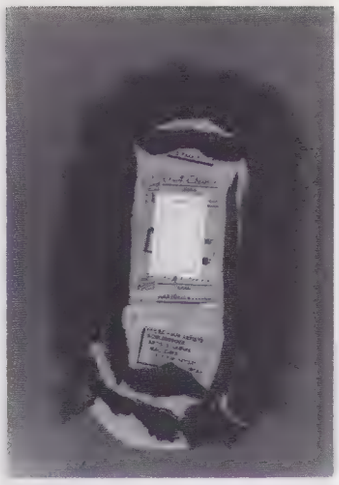
MARC CHAGALL

This exhibition celebrates Marc Chagall's 90th birthday and his long association with the Pierre Matisse Gallery. The temptation is always there, with Chagall, to regard his paintings in terms of iconography alone, especially in such an intimate, yet retrospective show which follows his work from the folk themes of Russia to the circuses of Paris. However, Francois Gilot in *Life with Picasso* quotes Picasso as saying, "When Matisse dies, Chagall will be the only painter left who understands what color really is . . . there's never been anybody since Renoir who has the feeling for light that Chagall has."

Taken from this point of view, the exhibition as a whole

Marc Chagall, The Double-Faced Bride, 1927. *Oil on canvas, 38¾ x 28¾". Courtesy Pierre Matisse Gallery.*

Robert Motherwell, Two Reds, 1974. *Acrylic and collage on board, 27 x 18". Courtesy Davis and Long Gallery.*



is extraordinarily revealing. The intense feeling for color and light has never failed Chagall, certainly not since his first arrival in Paris. That same vivacity of hue, the sense of how to make the most strident complementaries work as closely together as pastel shades, is still totally intact right up to his most recent 1977 works. *La kermesse,* a scene of a village fair in Vitebsk done in 1908, shows Chagall working in tonal, dense, darkly expressionist colors, yet by 1911 in *La fiancée à l'éventail,* Chagall seems to have been attracted by the soft, dreamy palette of such an artist as Marie Laurencin, and by 1913 in the famous Guggenheim Museum painting, *Paris par la fenêtre,* a fauve explosion of vivid, highly saturated color has erupted. Chagall's images have become so imitated and so popularized that they are now almost invisible; we barely see them and instead are left with the glorious color-light sensations. Future generations, no longer overexposed to poor borrowings from Chagall, will no doubt be able to see freshly again both the imagery and the formal excellence of the artist. (Pierre Matisse, *May 17-June 11*)

AMERICAN COLLAGE

This exhibition of *American Collage* is good to look at and yet serves a didactic purpose. So many American artists have at one time or another worked in collage, yet we don't usually think of them as being associated with this medium. For example, there are collages here by Joseph Stella, one of them done with boxes of Chiclets, also collages by George L.K. Morris, whose *Indians Fighting* of 1935 uses primitive sign-symbols and birch bark.

The show reminds us that Ad Reinhardt worked in collage in the 1940s and that collage was indigenous also to Joseph Cornell's work. As the show reveals, other artists who have worked with collage techniques (although the final purpose is not always the juxtaposition of images at different levels of reality or perception that collage makes possible) are Christo, Red Grooms, Jim Dine, and Robert Motherwell. Lesser known artists are also represented; artists such as Bob Cato and Robert Nickle show a sensitive handling of collage materials. (Davis and Long, *June 6-July 1*)

ANIA BIEN

However timeless a photograph, a single photograph nevertheless fixes time and space within a particular moment. In her series of *Photo Sequences,* Ania Bien presents a more tenuous and subtle exploration of the space-time continuum. The image itself may or may not change in actuality during the course of the photographs; that is, shadows on a wall may increase in size as time passes yet the corner of a building may be seen during a close time sequence in the same general type of light. Yet what always changes is the approach to the subject; the *Photo Sequences* are often taken from varying distances or different points of view. For example, a tree trunk is seen in a close-up so that attention is focused on the texture of the bark; it is only when photographed from a greater distance that the tree is recognizable as a tree rather than as a mottled, ragged surface.

Sometimes Bien records variations on a theme such as the benches in the Villa Medici Garden, each similar bench distinguished by the variety of foliage surrounding

Eliza Moore, Flight of the Heart, 1977. *Acrylic on canvas, 51 x 51". Courtesy Betty Parsons Gallery.*

Toko Shinoda, Celestial Entrance, 1976. *Sumi ink on mulberry paper, 71 x 53½". Courtesy Betty Parsons Gallery.*

it, or she photographs a row of doors, each door save one with the identical style of numbers. What Bien offers the viewer is a heightened awareness of similarities and differences. Since her photographs are small in scale, this nuanced approach to subject matter is somehow more vivid. Bien's photographs tend to be rather spare (there are four tulips aligned, never a baroque bunch), yet the best are those in which she has allowed herself the most romantic and poetic sensibility. (Castelli Graphics, *April 30-May 21*)

TOKO SHINODA / ELIZA MOORE

Lyrical paintings with sweeping calligraphic images reveal the skill and aplomb of Toko Shinoda. Sumi ink and contrasting areas of applied gold or silver leaf offer a pleasing opposition of shine and matte finish in these works and Shinoda deals deftly with the varying transparencies of materials. The brushstrokes are active and sure, yet the feeling conveyed by these paintings is essentially serene; the forms suggest grasses blown by a breeze, spumes of spray, and the outcroppings of rocks or ledges. Colors tend to be subdued and tonal, accented with an occasional sparse area of red or green.

Eliza Moore has a playful spirit, perhaps most succinctly conveyed in her fresh watercolors and wall reliefs, bits of newspaper stuck on the wall above plastic strips, like birds on the wing flying over a horizon line. Her large canvases are in the romantic landscape mood of Turner, albeit they are essentially abstractions from nature. Yet it is in the piquancy of the smaller works that Moore's humor and sparkle is most fully revealed. (Betty Parsons, Shinoda, *April 19-May 7,* Moore, *May 10-28*)

MAURICE PRENDERGAST

One of the greater pleasures of the 1977 art season has been the arrival of a traveling exhibition, organized by Eleanor Green, of almost 90 paintings and monotypes by Maurice Prendergast (1859-1924). Few are likely to be totally unfamiliar with Prendergast's work; his tapestry-like landscape and beach scenes, peopled with charming ladies in long dresses holding parasols, his dappled Venetian watercolors which show vacation crowds enjoying views of St. Mark's Church or of canals—all these form the innocent, joyful view of life that we associate with this artist. Also well known is the influence of the Nabis on Prendergast's painting, a reinforcement to his natural inclination toward bright, abstract spots of patterned color and flattened space.

Yet this show reveals much about Prendergast that is unexpected. Seeing so many of his monotypes at once, one realizes the great sophistication of touch of this supposedly naive painter. Then there are the portraits, such as *Girl in Blue,* where forceful personalities emerge, paintings which show how closely Prendergast looked at Cézanne, absorbing freshly Cézanne's structure and color. Prendergast's love of pattern seems to encompass a familiarity with Indian art as well as with decorative architectural details as can be seen respectively in *Hindu Dancer* and *Clocktower.* Such paintings as the opalescent *Sunset and Sea Fog* show Prendergast's great skill not merely as a creator of decorative patterns but as an artist who could achieve a nuanced sense of light and atmosphere. It will surely be some time before a Prendergast exhibition of this size, scope, and quality is offered again for our delectation. (Davis and Long, *May 4-28*)

Maurice Prendergast, Sunset and Sea Fog, 1915. *Oil on canvas, 18 x 29". Courtesy Davis and Long Gallery.*

CARL ANDRE Sperone Westwater Fischer
K.H. HÖDICKE René Block
DEBORAH TURBEVILLE Sonnabend
DENNIS OPPENHEIM John Gibson
JANET RIFKIN John Gibson

By VALENTIN TATRANSKY

Carl Andre, Prime Rectiles, 1977. *Steel plates, 1/8 x 8 x 15-3/8" each. Courtesy Sperone Westwater Fischer.*

CARL ANDRE

Carl Andre's largest sculpture contained rows of steel plates, which Andre had found in a metal scrapyard, already cut to a standard size. he organized their placement in rows by using the prime numbers as cardinals, and entitled the piece *Prime Rectiles* (1977). The work began with one plate in the corner of the room, and continued from the wall with every prime number, up to 31, designating the number of plates for each row. Empty rows of space were left between the plates for every non-primary number. Andre has relied on the number system before as a mode of presentation—*Cardinals* (1972), *Cold Deck* (1974), and *Triode* (1975) series—giving his work its finite description. A prime number can be divided by no other number other than itself, and Andre's use of these numbers also reveals a metaphor of the fundamentalist nature of his art. Within the rows these plates have no internal progression; they suggest nothing of themselves, other than their own perishable nature. In fact, the beauty of these plates was enhanced by the manner in which they had been weathered, being covered with rust and the attendant interplay of rainbow hues on the metal surface.

Blue Equivalents (1977) occupied a room to itself. Andre arranged 30 hot-rolled steel plates in various rectangular groupings around the room, all of which bordered the wall on at least one side. These groups of plates were identified by technical terms taken from the mason's trade. Their designation as either a "3 Header" or "2 Stretcher" referred to the short or long side of the brick. Two sculptures, *5th Copper Corner* (1976) and *Zinc-Zinc Plain* (1969), were identified by their constituent element and their position in the room, the latter occupying a center portion. These elements are substances that cannot be separated into different substances other than by nuclear disintegration. Ever since the mid-Sixties, Andre's sculpture has been dependent on his sense of placement and numerical proportion for its inventiveness; otherwise, like the ground it rests on, formal excavations would only exacerbate its presence. (Sperone Westwater Fischer, *May 4-28*)

K.H. HÖDICKE

On April 18 the René Block Gallery began installing six large buckets of liquid tar on their wall. Each day a new bucket was affixed on the wall at perpendicular angles in order to empty its contents. The tar was so viscous and heavy that its movement, like the hands on a clock, was practically invisible. Gravity turned the tar into a plastic organism of loops, folds, and accretions. K.H. Hödicke had originally executed this sculpture in 1969 at Berlin. He began making sculpture out of tar and feathers in 1968, a time when earthworks were still a recent development. (Robert Smithson had proposed works of sculpture out of tar and gravel in 1966). Aside from being a revelation of the earth's processes and materials, another manifestation of the earthworks was their inherent expression of aesthetic intent.

The elegance of Hödicke's sculpture lies in the way the materials reveals itself by the stress of its own weight. The tar has been removed from any man-made use, other than that of contemplation. Furthermore, gravity expressed the formal qualities of the tar within a number of days. Since making earthworks, Hödicke has been involved in film, photography, and conceptual pieces. However, it was a good idea to reinstall this sculpture, to indicate once again how the procedures of the earthworks, temporal processes that record material impressions, are contained within supposedly more refined techniques, like film, photography, and conceptual art. (René Black, *April 16-May 14*)

DEBORAH TURBEVILLE

Turbeville's fashion photographs displayed an important truth in regard to the formation of beauty. Her photographs showed fashion models, vehicles of artifice, in various natural or utilitarian contexts: a country landscape, a warehouse, a residential interior, or amidst ruins. The values in her black and white photographs were often of a cool, fog-bound, muted type. These photographs seemed to be of the kind wholly obedient to the imagination, to a faculty absorbed in advertisement.

The contradictory element

K.H. Hödicke, Installation, 1969. *Courtesy René Block Gallery.*

Deborah Turbeville, Untitled, 1977. *Silverprint, 8 x 10". Courtesy Sonnabend Gallery.*

in this kind of precious artifice, what others would call "unreal," is the fact that it is completely unexpected, therefore it partakes of the real nature of things. One photograph (*#18*), in particular, of a young female model in a beautiful dress, against a light, empty wall, caught in a gesture of refinement with her hand raised to her face, brought to mind the intensity of the moment. The artifice of fashion beauty harbors the power of juxtaposition to create diversity, as in the photograph of a fashion model and a little girl in a textile factory, which elicited this same mood of transience, of the expenditure of labor, which the camera excels in recording. Beauty, then, being an experience of the memory, emerges as something more than the assembly of a formal type. (Sonnabend, *May 18-31*)

DENNIS OPPENHEIM

In a darkened room one found an 18-inch mechanical mannequin standing behind a podium, delivering a lecture. The movement of the figure's lower jaw, like that of a ventriloquist's dummy, was synchronized with a sound control system. The mannequin was an image of an artist speaking about the history of his art, while before him slides flashed on the screen. The slide projector, however, only showed empty flashes of colored light; there were no works to be seen. Oppenheim's installation of this "surrogate performer" told of an absence that had taken place within his art. Over the sound system one heard the mannequin-artist describe individual works from his past, while continually voicing regrets, invoking the "spirit" to "burn these works before they register on the eyes of the people." The lecture began with an early "figurative painting, of a young boy on a swing," and continued into the '60s and '70s with references to some of Oppenheim's own outdoor pieces. The one hour lecture on the artist's history kept turning into a plea for the healing of his memory.

Besides the slide lecture, another room contained large *Twin Wells* (1976-77), made from sheet metal, which emitted smoke and was also accompanied by a sound track. To questions asked over the sound system about the generating source, a voice would say "where's the steam coming from if there's nothing left to burn." Irony tempered and increased the effectiveness of Oppenheim's evocation of the absence of meaning. His use of the striking little man, here and in previous shows, and also puns as vehicles of performance showed a sense of self-proportion and distance. (John Gibson, *May 7-25*)

JANET RIFKIN

Rifkin made paradoxical serial photographs. She photographed color slides that she herself had taken within their original, three-dimensional ambience. In most, Rifkin carefully shifted, at measured increments, the projected slide image over the corresponding "real" set of objects, creating multi-layered photographic dislocations. *Intrusions On A Sliding Function* (1972) consisted of 16 photographs that showed a color slide of a walking woman being moved 90 degrees down the wall and onto the floor. This description of the wall and the floor by the movement of the slide transparency ended in the obliteration of the projected image in the last photograph.

The recent photographic series were much more complex. In *Transgression* (1977) two slide projectors were utilized side by side. One image, only partially lit, was lifted out of the same image, a hallway and toilet more fully lit, ending with a photograph that was entirely bathed in white light, leaving the image only barely discernible. The sequential movement in all of the series involved creating some kind of brief moment of climactic illumination that, upon apprehension, almost immediately canceled itself. One of the most impressive of the series, *Molasses* (1977), started with a dark photograph of a broken molasses bottle, which became gradually illuminated by the white light from the projected slide of the same broken molasses bottle. This white frame of light was lowered until the two images overlapped, and then continued, leaving the original molasses bottle in darkness again. These series evoked the structural basis of the photograph, a light exposed surface, as their thematic metaphor. (John Gibson, *May 28-June 18*)

Janet Rifkin, Intrusions on a Sliding Function, 1972. *Courtesy John Gibson Gallery.*

Dennis Oppenheim, Surrogate Performer. 1977. *Mixed media. Courtesy John Gibson Gallery.*

CHUCK CLOSE	Pace
JAMES ROSATI	Marlborough
SCULPTURE IN THE CONSTRUCTIVIST TRADITION	Hamilton
PHOTONOTATIONS II	Rosa Esman
VALERIE MAYNARD	Just Above Midtown
NEWCOMERS	Jacques Seligman
CIRCA 1910	Whitney Downtown

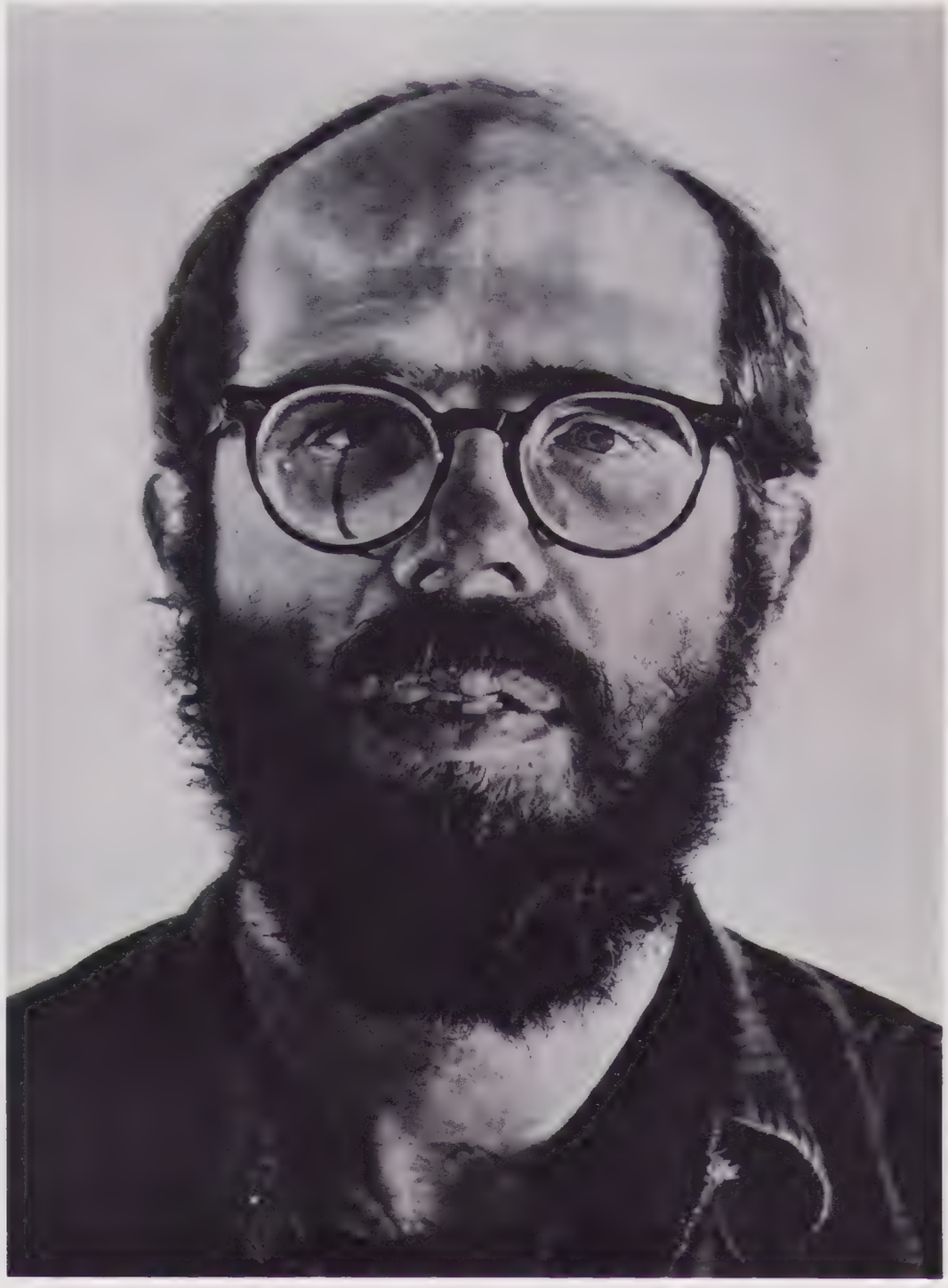
By BARBARA CAVALIERE

CHUCK CLOSE

Standing in front of the behemoth heads by Chuck Close, you are transformed into a pocket-sized Tom Thumb; you sense the awe of the Lilliputians as they encountered the monstrous Gulliver. The Gargantuan proportion and meticulous detail turn flaws, slits, and furrows in the skin's pores into map-like projections of rivers and plateaus, aerial views of mountains and valleys. Nostrils become cave entrances; mouths are rolling hills; oodles of curled hair resemble thick, twisted jungle vines. Close particularly enjoys the look of dense, stringy, kinky locks. In his jumbo *Self Portrait* (1976-77), he revels in his own dark, wiry mustache and beard, rendering each strand with a thin, nervous brushstroke. In *Linda* (1975-76), his first color portrait since 1973, her mop of pseudo-Afro ringlets has a garish, beauty parlor red-orange tinge, the "natural look," carefully worked out, which is so much in style at the moment. The entire portrait is bathed in this artificial, bright orange glow, the product of the Kodachrome print. In *Linda/Eye Series I-V* (1977), Close focuses in on Linda's left eye, that is on the portion of it which falls within one square of his grid, coloring the images in jarring tones of magenta, cyanne, magenta plus cyanne, and yellow successively.

Klaus (1976), like the subjects of the other larger portraits, stares cooly and intently out at the viewer; his closely cropped hair emphasizes the ovoid shape of his head. Even more so than with the other subjects, Klaus's features appear bloated and distended, almost as if seen through a convex lense, like Parmigianino in his famous *Self Portrait*. It is the hair's-breadth closeness of the camera shot which produces this distorted quality; Close is utterly faithful to the photographic model even to the blurring of the image which occurs at the neck and shoulders. For the monumental black and white portraits, he uses watercolor on paper which is mounted on canvas, an absorbent surface which suits his intentions well. Close works slowly and meticulously, section by section (as exemplified in his series of *Twelve Heads x 154 Dots* of 1977); he often takes over a year to complete a single large piece. (*Linda*, for instance, took 14 months.) (Pace, *April 30-June 4*)

Chuck Close, Self-Portrait, 1976-77. *Watercolor on paper mounted on canvas, 80½ x 59". Courtesy Pace Gallery.*



JAMES ROSATI

Elegant, accomplished, sleek are adjectives descriptive of James Rosati's sculpture. Most of the works in his show stress a vertical balance of

mellifluously curved forms which rest on one another with no signs of how they are junctured. The surface of his preferred zinc material is polished to a lustrous satin sheen, complementing the fluid grace of his tapering angular forms and enhancing their crispness with restrained, evenly textured shadows. In *Study for Untitled (Three Forms No. 2)* of 1975, cut-out arcs which resemble stylized letter Cs or abbreviated punctuation marks are superimposed to a broad Y form at the top, evoking the poised, tremulous balancing position of an acrobatic team. Some works, such as *Upright No. 3* (1975-76), are more strictly vertical in thrust, more columnar and stark like contemporary architecture. Forms which are tapered more at the bottom push upward; they are fitted together like the interlocking parts of a puzzle.

In a number of reliefs, Rosati concentrates on such interlocking, angular shapes juxtaposed in an irregular grid pattern, creating V-slit shadows by slightly raising some sections. *Relief No. 3* (1977) is a particularly lovely work of smoothly polished zinc which emphasizes distorted V-shapes, fitting them together near the center and forming the outline of an angled-off cross pattern. *Untitled Study* (1976) is a ladder built of irregular H shapes topped by an inverted, squared-off U. It is more stable than the lighter pieces, heavier and somewhat

James Rosati, Untitled, 1975-76. *Cor-ten steel, 79" high. Courtesy Marlborough Gallery.*

like the arches of Roman buildings. One *Untitled* (1975-76) of cor-ten steel rusted naturally in the outdoors and was left in this state for the show. It is typical of another mood of some of the work, done with flat sheets of material which are bent and curved and have more complex parts and an expressionist flavor. Rosati is most successful when using polished zinc and a few simpler shapes; these means seem to correlate most naturally with his individual purist sensibility. (Marlborough, *April 23-May 21*)

SCULPTURE IN THE CONSTRUCTIVIST TRADITION

This exhibition consisted of twelve sculptures by as many artists and constituted a skeletal selection of works which fall within, in the broadest sense of the term, the "constructivist tradition." Robert Murray's *Capilano* (1969) is a streamlined, slick piece of steel painted a cool maroon; it is constructed of long sections of hollow, rectangular steel with the stress on a light, horizontal balance, giving it a poised stability. Lyman Kipp's *Trish* (1977), with its rectangular sheets of aluminum painted blue, encourages viewing from a variety of angles from which its configuration changes to include two, three, or four of the sections. Kenneth Snelson's unmistakable style is exemplified by a delicate wall piece titled *Matrix VIII* (1962-69), a mesh of aluminum bars and thin wires forming crosses and triangles which converge or separate according to the viewing angle.

A similar mood is stimulated by Forrest Myers' hanging piece, evocatively titled *Ziggurats & Whisky & Wild, Wild Women* (1965) which implies mystical connotations in formations of triangles and pyramids floating lightly in interlocking formation. It is very different from Mark di Suvero's *Mayakovsky* (1976) which rests close to the floor; its rusted screw, chain, and sheets of steel forming an axe-like form exemplify di Suvero's well known expressionist statements. Diagonal movement is emphasized by the rusted cor-ten steel, uneven, geometric shapes in Charles Ginnever's *Olympus*

which resembles the forms of much abstract painting which suggests flight. Other works included were a small Caro called *Piece LIII* (1968) with horizontal arch forms painted maroon, Clement Meadmore's simple and effective *Slide* (1977), a related but heavier Tony Rosenthal titled *T-Square* (1976), and a solid, small Isaac Witkin, *Vector (Maquette II)* (1975). (Hamilton, *May 5-June 1*)

PHOTONOTATIONS II

Photographs by artists who are not known mainly for work in this medium can provide some interesting and revelatory insights into their major artistic efforts. This exhibition was a cross-section of such photos by some 35 artists, covering a broad scope of styles and approaches. Prints ranged from Sheeler's crisp, sharp *Barn, Bucks County* (1915), a view of solitary rural American architecture and landscape closely akin to his paintings, to LeWitt's equally high caliber *Brick Wall* (1977), a series of studies arranged in his characteristic grid of squares, emphasizing serial gradations from whites to blacks as they appear in a section of wall.

There were some notable works from the 1920s and '30s, such as Man Ray's *Etoile de Mer* (1928), juxtaposing a starfish with an arm which is menacingly grasping a knife, and Magritte's *L'Etoile de Pierre* (1935), a view from above of four figures lying on a bed of rocks and forming a star/starfish pattern. Other welcome attractions were El Lissitzky's *Long Distance Runner* (1930), superimposing an athlete jumping a hurdle in front of a 42nd Street background of lit marquees, and a Moholy-Nagy from the Bauhaus years called *Fotoplastik* (c. 1925), exemplifying his unique contribution to modern photography. From the 1940s to '60s period, Eva Hesse's *Untitled* (c. 1957, a photogram) and Robert Smithson's *Urination Map of the Constellation Hydra* (1969) were both outstanding examples of the individual sensibilities of these two important artists.

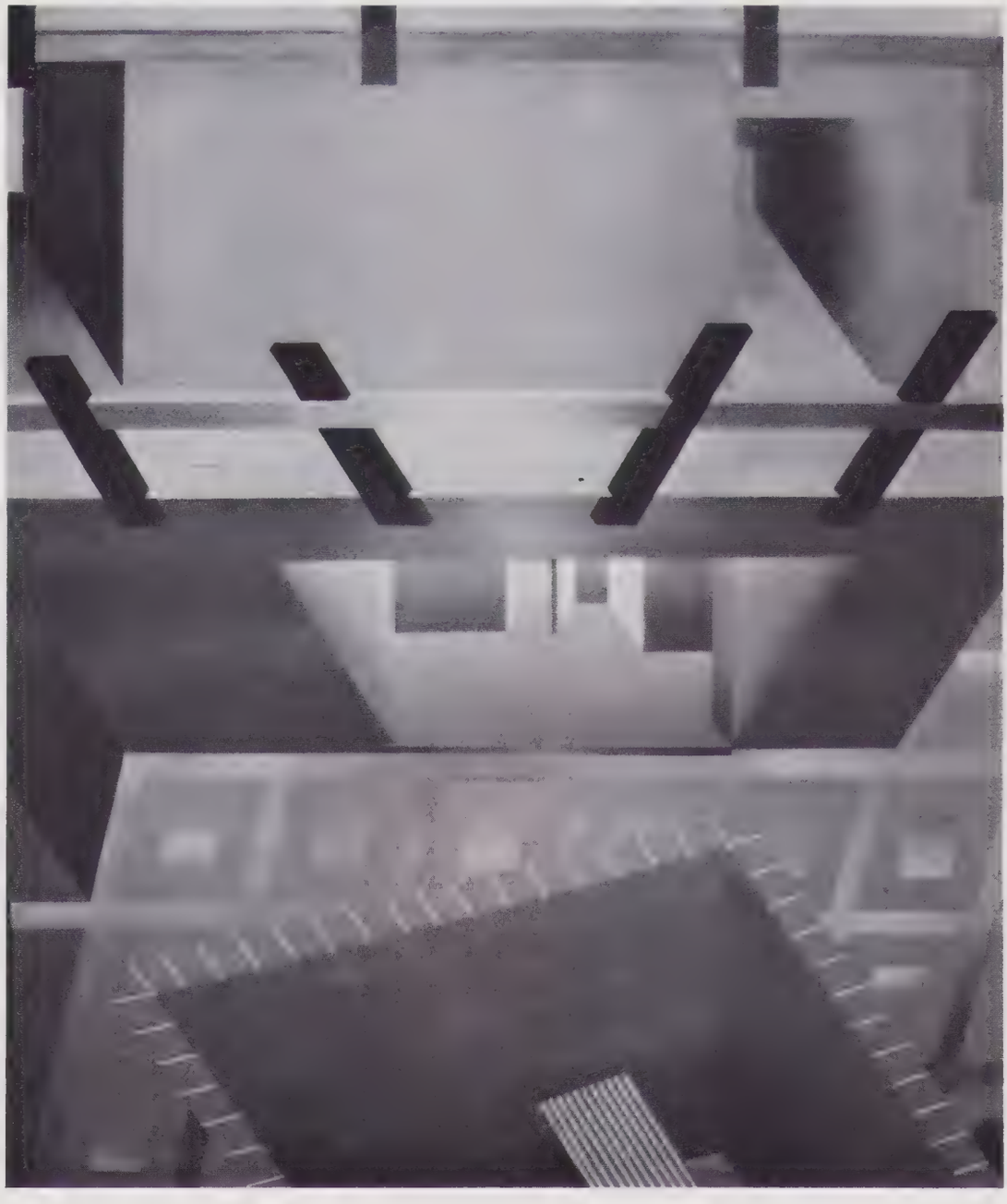
The 1970s were heavily represented with a variety of works by artists such as Arman, David Hockney, Larry Rivers, and Warhol. Diebenkorn's aerial photos taken over the Arizona and California deserts (1970) distinctly reveal an appropriate source for his large paintings. Dorothea Rockburne's series of twelve prints called *Ipanema Suite* (1971) provided an opportunity to observe the artist's working method and get a look at portions of the works as they are developing. Robert Mangold's two series of photos, *Barn Doors* (1976) and *Protruberances* (1977), are ready analogies for his geometric compositions and quite accomplished works in themselves. (Rosa Esman, *May 3-June 4*)

VALERIE MAYNARD

Valerie Maynard's elongated and rough plaster busts demonstrate her internalization of works of traditional African sculpture. Many have the emotive power of these truly primitive works and of such modern primitivizers as Giacometti. Maynard has considerable technical ability and has shown her flair for capturing strength and grace in her figures through a rapid, expressionist style. But representational expressionism is a sticky business, one which easily moves into the realm of pure decoration. Maynard's work seems on the verge of such an occurrence. Works on paper such as *Mind Flower* and *Home Touch* with its willowy flowers weaving through a stylized, Art Nouveau woman's body are the most prominent examples of prettified mannerism.

In a few paper reliefs, such *Famine* with its profiles with open mouths, Maynard transmits a sense of the sounds of horror emanating from her figures with relative success. In others, however, such as *Ade Nick's Tunic I*, trimming and an excess of ornamentation take over, turning these works into so much icing without the cake so to speak. By eliminating all but the components necessary to her expression, Maynard comes closer to success in her two-dimensional work of the same title. The most encouraging works in the show are *Twinology I and II*. The dark figures of the "siamese twins" are

Bill Paskewitz, Untitled, 1977. *Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 72". Courtesy Jacques Seligman Gallery.*



submerged in a womb-like atmosphere of dark grays and maroons. They seem to be pulling apart desperately in an effort at independence. Maynard shows herself as in a period of uncertainty; she has the means but is struggling with her tendency toward ornamentation. (Just Above Midtown, *April 27-May 21*)

NEWCOMERS

This exhibition gathered together a diverse group of over thirty young artists, mostly painters, for a look at some new talent. Pamela Denny is a young painter with a rare ability to express the quality of light in color, a fact clearly indicated by her two contributions — painterly, subtly variegated modular studies in color and pattern. *Program No. I* is executed predominantly in glowing tonalities of yellows, and *Temptation of St. Anthony* dwells on movements from pale lilacs to rich, deep purples. Bill Paskewitz stood out as a painter well along the route in the development of a sure, individualized imagery and technique. His *Untitled* is a fascinating, unsettling maze of corridors, rooms, beams, and passageways with an ominous empty swimming pool jutting into the space from the lower foreground. He juggles and overlaps his hard-edged, illusionistic, geometric shapes (achieved with the use of tape), setting them in a deep space which is quirky and surreal with odd directional pulls. His mannered, in-between color (mainly off-tones of purples and greens in this work) amplify the sense of disturbing ambiguity which he courts with considerable success.

Grif Bates offered an homage to Hopper called *The Photographer's Photograph*, based on a well known Imogen Cunningham print, which is well crafted and incorporates a variety of beige tones; he captures the flavor of Hopper quite adeptly. Don Alfred Geyra's small painting titled *Armchair* is a proficient still life study of a simple office-type chair which shows a knack for rendering the grainy textural surfaces and reflections of artificial light on polished wood surfaces. This exhibition gave a chance for exposure to some new hopefuls who are definitely people to watch. (Jacques Seligman, *May 17-June 11*)

CIRCA 1910

The object of the exhibition was to examine the state of the arts in the United States around the time of the Armory Show of 1913. Included was an impressive array of the fine, decorative, and performing arts—everything from a delicate ecru-embroidered cotton net dress trimmed with pink silk satin (c. 1912) to a strange early Man Ray oil called *Woman Asleep* (1913) to a *Morris Chair* by Gustav Stickley (c. 1905) to a vintage print of Frank Lloyd Wright's *Robie House* (1908). Among the considerable number of paintings was a marvelous Stuart Davis called *The Back Room* (1913), an expressionistic scene of a tavern crowd with blurred green faces and heavy, black Fauvist outlines. Also, John Sloane's famous *Backyards, Greenwich Village* (1914) was there, as were works by Glackens, Marin, Hopper and Lawson. One of the most remarkable paintings was *Forms Abstracted* by Marsden Hartley (1913), which depicts a reddish lamb in front of an abstract, organic form and incorporates sun and star signs and a strangely prophetic target-like symbol.

The sculptures characteristic of the period were rather academic and dry as a rule, but one piece stood out, a futuristic-looking bronze head by Maurice Sterne called *The Bomb Thrower* (1910-14). The photography section presented some of the most accomplished material in the show. Alice Boughton's *The Seasons* (1909) and Anne Brigman's *The Brook* (1909) point up the prevalent view of women as dreamy-eyed muses or shy, retiring nudes. A dramatic profile portrait of *Alfred Stieglitz* by Frank Eugene (1909) was a fitting introduction to the master of the camera who was represented by three charming and strong prints of New York scenes and his *The Dirigible* (1910). Unfortunately, the stained glass windows of La Farge and Tiffany could only be shown in photographs as, of course, was also the case for architecture such as Penn Station (1906-10) and the Woolworth Building (1909-13). There were also posters, sheet music, and films (silent, of course) of the period. (Whitney Downtown, *May 5-June 8*)

JACOB EL HANANI Denise René
TONI DOVE Terry Dintenfass
CARL NICHOLAS TITOLO Terry Dintenfass
TREASURES FROM ROCHESTER Wildenstein
ROY GUSSOW Borgenicht
WALTER HATKE Robert Schoelkopf
GROUP SHOW Bertha Urdang

By JUDITH TANNENBAUM

JACOB EL HANANI

In his first one-man show in New York, Jacob El Hanani presented large, quiet, and pale abstract paintings in gray ink applied with a quill pen and a number of smaller primed and unprimed square canvases similarly covered with patterns of short individual lines and strokes. Despite the obsessive and painstaking nature of the artist's method, the work seems remote and cool. The controlled quality of the strokes is reinforced by always framing the field of marks within a self-border of several inches of white canvas. Each painting features a particular kind of stroke, but the separate marks may vary somewhat in density and tone (in part, as a result of the changing degree of sharpness or dullness of the penpoint), placement, length, and direction, thereby creating more or less regular patterns.

In most of the works, series of vertical lines form gentle, moirélike rhythmic effects which sometimes evoke atmospheric aerial landscapes; the ink may become almost invisible in areas of the surfaces. In others, more defined pebblelike patterns are created by overlapping circular and elliptical elements filled in with parallel strokes or by precise bands that interweave in different directions. These small darker compositions have greater visual interest than the expansive, very pale, lyrical canvases in which the patterns seem to dissolve and disappear.

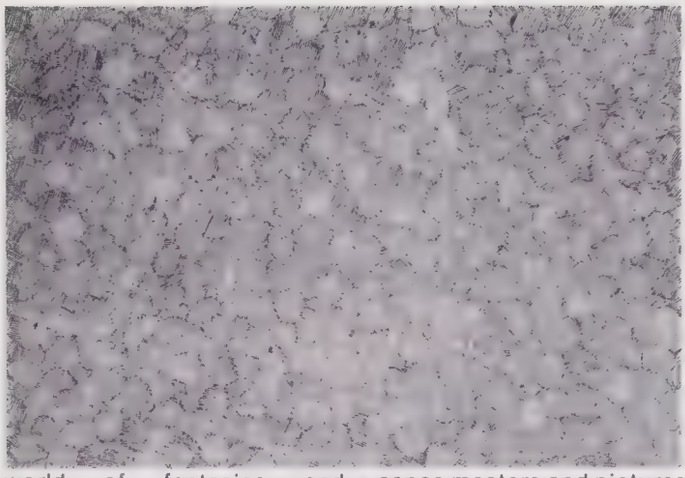
TONI DOVE

In her first one-woman show in New York, Toni Dove presented large, immaculate, skillfully executed watercolors that combine accurate representations of the "real" world with imaginary elements. All of the works include sections of maps, but the true geographical order may be freely altered by turning areas around or by juxtaposing ordinarily far-distant places. Edges of the maps appear to be torn; corners may be illusionistically turned up or the paper folded. Often various species of very realistically drawn birds, fish, shells, or flowers are deliberately positioned or integrated in the compositions. Expanses of snow-covered mountains or the Grand Canyon are precisely but delicately delineated and the outlined jigsawlike shapes are filled in with even color or gently modulated tones.

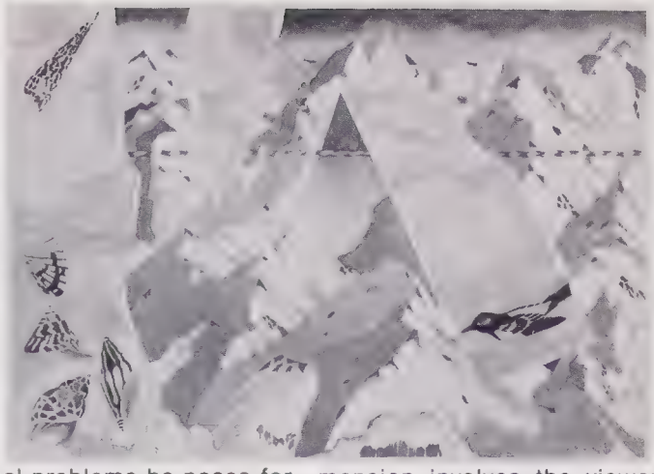
The palette is generally cool and light. Occasional geometric elements appear (a triangle, a pyramid) and in a number of pictures an illusionistic piece of rope is subtly woven through the composition suggesting a unifying thread. Several works include white rectangular insets filled with individual strokes of color from the artist's palette which similarly reminds us of the artmaking process and of the artist's individual presence among the global themes and images. Dove's layered, complex watercolors are very precise and elegant, yet they evoke a sense of calm and ease. (Terry Dintenfass, *May 3-27*)

CARL NICHOLAS TITOLO

Carl Nicholas Titolo's very small figurative paintings in mixed media constitute a world that ranges from gentle and lyrical to funny, erotic, macabre, and brutal. Despite the tiny scale (almost all the works are less than six inches in height and width), each picture draws us in and presents a curious narrative which challenges us to figure out the dramatic content and meaning of the scene. The subjects span all aspects of daily life and the settings similarly range from the circus (a recurrent motif) to Madison Avenue, a restaurant, the ferry to Block Island, and a hospital corridor. The frequent use of a frame or border and the somewhat aged surface quality of the color underscore the effect that we are entering the artist's private



Jacob El Hanani, Untitled #110, 1975. *Gray ink on canvas, 72 x 96". Courtesy Galerie Denise René.*



Toni Dove, High Ground III, 1975. *Watercolor, 29½ x 41". Courtesy Terry Dintenfass.*

world of fantasies and dreams. This is an imaginative realm, but one that is not too far removed from the ironies and nightmares of actual human experience. (Terry Dintenfass, *May 3-27*)

TREASURES FROM ROCHESTER

"Treasures from Rochester," a major benefit exhibition of 90 works from the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, is remarkable in its range and overall quality. Moreover, it reawakens our awareness of the very important role played by the smaller museums located throughout the country outside the major cities.

The medieval sculptures are of particular interest, especially the carved and polychromed limestone capital, *The Legend of St. Thomas* (late 12th c.) from the church of St. Martin, Candes, France. Among the European paintings are works by Italian and Flemish Renaissance masters and pictures by Noccolo dell'Abbate, El Greco, Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Jan van de Cappelle, Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Hubert Robert. Nineteenth and 20th century masters include Ingres, Courbet, Degas, Cézanne, Monet, Braque, and the German Expressionists. Among the important American works are Homer's dark and mysterious *Artist's Studio in an Afternoon Fog* (1894) and Eakins' intense portrait of his father-in-law, William MacDowell, painted in about 1904, as well as selections by Heade, Whistler, Cassatt, Sargent, Twachtman, Luks, Sloan, Marin, and Nadelman. (Wildenstein, *(April 15-May 28*)

ROY GUSSOW

Roy Gussow's exhibition of recent sculpture demonstrates the artist's complete mastery of both the difficult technical method he employs and of the formal problems he poses for himself. Gussow's highly polished sculptures are made with stainless steel sheets that are gracefully bent and welded together without the trace of a seam showing. With the exception of one soaring vertical piece, *Ellipsoid*, all of the works are rounded forms composed of two separate but interrelated elements set beside each other.

The two forms which create the larger sculpture are linked by the flow of their clean curving contours, immaculate planes and volumes which partially overlap or cut across each other when viewed from various positions. Also, the highly reflective quality of the surfaces results in additional shapes and patterns of light and shadow that connect one element to the other. Thus, these rounded two-part forms both open out and enclose space. Gussow's sculpture has a decidedly elegant and immaculate perfection, yet at the same time a sensuous dimension involves the viewer and firmly keeps the work from becoming cold or slick. (Borgenicht, *April 30-May 26*)

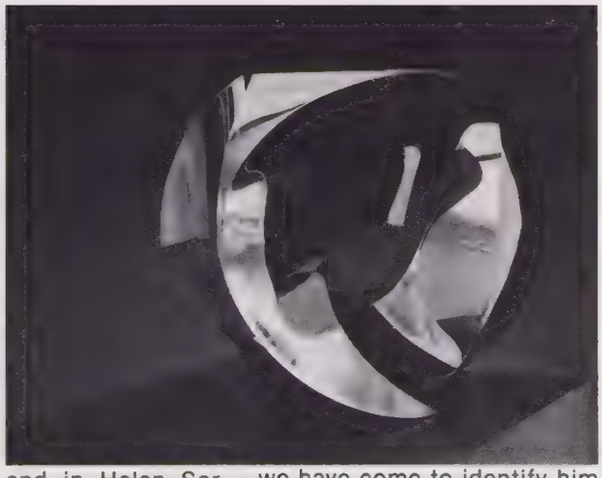
WALTER HATKE

Walter Hatke's meticulous realist paintings focus on his immediate environment: the rooms he lives and works in and the views of downtown buildings he sees from their windows. But in contrast to the personal nature of the subjects and the accuracy with which they are executed, the work has an almost unnatural cleanness, calm, and cool impersonality. The pictures are very carefully composed and feature simplified hard-edge forms and open spaces as well as elements rendered in great detail such as wood graining or cracks on the wall. Attention is given to the abstract patterns and shapes of shadows cast in the sunlit rooms.

Hatke also seems to take

Carl Nicholas Titolo, Festa, 1976-77. *Mixed media, 5-7/8 x 5¾".*
Courtesy Terry Dintenfass Gallery.

Walter Hatke, Breeze of Naw Ruz, 1975. *Oil on canvas, 42 x 54". Courtesy Robert Schoelkopf Gallery.*



Roy Gussow, Two Forms, 1974. *Stainless steel, 17½ x 23 x 21¼". Courtesy Borgenicht Gallery.*

delight in the play of oblique angles and lines, occasionally creating more active compositions—for example, *Front Room* with its irregular, angular arrangement of chairs, stools, tables, and easel. Perhaps the most intimate and warmest painting is *Breeze of Naw Ruz* which depicts a portion of the artist's bedroom, whereas the most intense is the full-length self-portrait with its almost baroque contrasts of light and shadow and tilting angles of the walls. Also in Hatke's first one-man show are a number of watercolors of serene, bright, clean, summer landscapes which are as carefully composed as the oils, and several pencil drawings which underscore the precise draftsmanship evident in the large paintings. (Robert Schoelkopf, *(May 17-June 10*)

GROUP SHOW

The Bertha Urdang Gallery has introduced a significant number of talented Israeli artists and has shown a marked preference for the art and sensibility of drawing. In the recent group exhibition, some 20 artists—both Israeli and American—were represented. The work is diverse, yet one is struck by the overall predominance of gray, black, and white, or conversely by the absence of color. However, rather than a minimalist austerity, there seems to be a somewhat expressionistic undercurrent in a number of the artists' work evident in their use of a layered structure, abstract gestural imagery, or the prominance of irregular, torn edges.

Joshua Neustein's works of overlapping pieces of paper in modulated, atmospheric grays focus attention on the ragged edges; Moshe Kupferman's dark charcoal drawing and lighter paintings evoke a brooding, introspective mood; Michael Gitlin's works using wood planks painted black have ripped edges and recall the irregular "zips" of Barnett Newman; and in Helen Soreff's gray painting, black flecks now seem to appear over and under the few horizontal lines. The mystery and levels of meaning that can be achieved through limited means are further underscored in Susan Hoeltzel's unstretched canvas, *Markers Indicating 21 Paired Intervals on a Picture Plane.* Similarly, A. Ben Haim creates variegated white works of considerable subtlety and richness in which layers of newspaper strips are covered over with white and the surfaces are sometimes scratched or cut through. Of the more geometric works, Buky Schwartz's corner piece—a black parallelogram painted on the wall with tape lines outlining the other sides of the cube applied both flat on the wall and so that they connect points across open space—represents a change from the sculptures made with wood beams and mirrors to create optical illusions which we have come to identify him with. For Peter Berg's *Corridor Piece* done specifically for the show, a wall was built and a large rectangular column cut out from it; when seen from the other side, the simple white obstruction appeared to be surrounded by light. Heidi Gluck's spare drawings feature a brick tone which added a welcome note of color to the show.

Also of interest are two separate pieces of "body art" by two Israeli women. In Sadeh-Goshen's piece, the blindfolded artist is strapped to a wall in different positions that evoke great dignity and power; whereas Giladi stands on the beach wrapped in a cloth from her thighs up—in one image bathed in light, the other in dark shadow. Also featured were two works by Benni Efrat from 1969 and Karen Shaw's *Reckoning Rilke.* Kate Resek presented a new series of vertical drawings. (Bertha Urdang, *April 26-May 28*)

Winslow Homer, The Artist's Studio in an Afternoon Fog, 1894.
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30". Courtesy Wildenstein and Rochester Museum.

HAROLD GREGOR Tibor de Nagy
MATT PHILLIPS Marilyn Pearl
A SEPARATE REALITY Graham
ROMARE BEARDEN Cordier & Ekstrom
GENE DAVIS Fischbach

By NORMAN TURNER

Harold Gregor, Illinois Corn Crib #28, 1974. *Oil and acrylic on canvas, 43 x 66". Courtesy Tibor de Nagy Gallery.*

HAROLD GREGOR

Harold Gregor shows large midwestern farm scenes painted with the assistance of slides in a hard, bright, relentlessly detailed style. The color is bright and exceedingly single-minded, in the color slide manner: clear skys are blue, foliage is green, earth is brown, sheet metal is silver with blue shadows. It is the peculiar virtue of color slides that they unremittingly confirm the most widely held assumptions about how things look, no doubt in part because they have substantially contributed to those assumptions. Many people think they convey reality. These people are right, if one accepts as real those attributes of the tangible world around which there can collect a consensus.

It is impossible to say how Gregor responds to such considerations, whether there is some flavor of ironic deadpan. One can say with assurance that he transcribes the image scrupulously and with skill. One picture in the show was painted from direct observation. That it looks like the others provides a convincing demonstration of the ability of painters to train themselves to see in a photographic mode, to shape their expectations in that direction. It becomes possible with experience to paint photographic pictures without resorting to photographs. I like Gregor's subject matter. Three paintings are broad vistas of gently rolling crop land. There are pictures of barns, one with a red wagon and hay lift, and one picture of galvanized corrugated steel grain storage bins beside a railroad. The nondescriptness of these views, stolidly confronted, constitutes a worthy ambition to deal with ordinary surroundings. (Tibor de Nagy, *April 23-May 12*)

MATT PHILLIPS

Monotypes are made by painting on a metal plate with oil paint and pulling a unique impression by bringing the prepared plate together with paper or canvas under pressure. The result occupies a middle ground between printmaking and painting, but the principal technical issue is that a variety of manipulations and effects are available to the artist that cannot readily be obtained elsewhere. The characteristic slithery look of the medium, a result of sliding the paint around on a slick, nonabsorbent surface, is very much present in the large show of monotypes by Matt Phillips. He states that it is "a question of the plate as an arena of quicksilver activity, always fluid, open to change and risk taking, like playing jazz, the image being built or canceled out by a cloth wipe or turpentine."

He likes to put down translucent brushstrokes in parallel rows across the surface of one shape, then in parallel rows in an opposing direction on a neighboring shape, and so on across the picture. The resulting structure of texture patches is broken up and enlivened by a variety of other shapes and paint manipulations. A pale tonality predominates, the white of the paper having been used for all the light areas and having been also allowed to strike through the colors. There are no solid or dark areas. A large number of works show an interior with a figure reading, the face a white, blank shape. Often a number of objects intervene between the front of the picture and the viewer, and in a number of instances one of these objects is a conspicuous mass of flowers, larger than the head and placed in proximity to it. This suggests a poetic association between the person and the flowers. The soft shapes, pale colors, and subject matter yield a uniform impression of relaxation, intimacy, and gentleness. (Marilyn Pearl, *April 26-May 17*)

A SEPARATE REALITY

The pictures in this exhibition range in time from the 15th century to the present and through a wide range of styles. Such extreme diversity makes a comprehensive discussion here impossible. Of particular interest is a contemporary painting called *Don Gennaro, Self Portrait* by Robert Henry. A head that is a constellation of many different spots, strokes and patches, there are two fairly well defined ears; a converging of elements suggests eye, nose and mouth, but this floating swarm is in no way descriptive. Clearly a personal statement of visionary import, the picture emits a majestic and frightening presence. It is well accomplished.

Also of interest among the contemporary works are those of Irving Kriesberg and Gregory Gillespie. Kriesberg shows two objects in which a

Matt Phillips, Sandy Reading, 1977. *Monotype, 19¾ x 11". Courtesy Marilyn Pearl Gallery.*

Robert Henry, Don Gennaro, Self Portrait, 1977. *Oil on canvas, 30 x 40". Courtesy Graham Gallery.*

Romare Bearden, The Return of Odysseus (homage to Pintoricchio and Benin), 1977. *Collage, 44 x 56". Courtesy Cordier & Ekstrom Gallery.*

number of paintings are hinged together so that various combinations of pictures can be folded into conjunction with each other, a format that may have been suggested by altarpieces. The crucial difference is that altarpieces are usually displayed as physically stable objects containing only the potentiality of movement while Kriesberg's pieces are accompanied by injunctions for the spectator to open them up. The paintings themselves are of highly anthropomorphized animal creatures who play out obscure ritualized dramas. Gillespie's *The Beetle and the Frog*, in which a frog is being attacked or caressed, or both, by a beetle, looks much older than it is (say, late 16th century). This is not easy to bring off and raises interesting questions pertaining to period and style. (Graham, *May 10-June 17*)

ROMARE BEARDEN

Romare Bearden's pictures of events from the Odyssey are technically collages, since they are assembled from cut-out pieces of colored paper, but their activity is so close in spirit to painting one tends to experience them as such. In fact, substantial distinctions between the two mediums are apparent. With the exception of some use of watercolor or gouache, the paint appears to have been silk-screened onto the paper. Because there is no paint texture the color is seen more as an entity than as one attribute of a physical substance, yet it is an entity that is physically cut up. This characteristic combination of the incorporeal with requirements of extreme decisiveness is buoyantly evident here as the action of a sensibility.

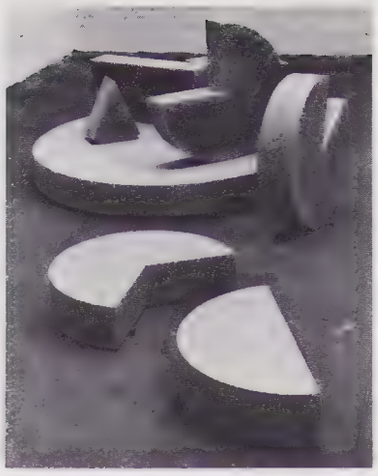
That the resoluteness of his works may rest on complicated thought is indicated by certain ancillary matters. The people in Bearden's Homer are black. The color appears to signify not only race in particular but, more generally, a choice of color for people, distinctive and brilliant, that sets them apart from inanimate nature as sources of vital energy. This reading of the black as generally signifying life force is supported by Bearden's extending it to animals, as in *Cattle of the Sun God.* This interweaving of Africa and the West is further indicated by *The Return of Odysseus,* subtitled "homage to Pintoricchio and Benin," Pintoricchio being the 16th-century Italian considered to have initiated the school of Fontainebleau, while Benin refers to the West African civilization. The bringing together of different strands of culture in so deliberate and personal a manner is a liberty only modern artists can enjoy. It is one that Bearden has utilized with much wit and feeling in these resonantly mythophilic pictures. (Cordier & Ekstron, *April 27-May 28*)

GENE DAVIS

Gene Davis did the work in this show back in 1957 and 1958 while he was still casting about for a definite mode. They consist of a centered white rectangle surrounded by a rectangular band of primary color which is in turn surrounded by an outer rim of untouched primed canvas. During the same two-year period Davis also painted a circle centered in the canvas and a square not centered but somewhat off center and radically tilted. This painting shows that while Davis was moving toward relatively stable formats, he was at the same time not ready to abandon disequilibrium.

The shown paintings have tentative, ambiguous qualities that contrast sharply with the subsequent taped stripe works. The primary color of the outer rectangle is measured by one's eye for chromatic activity mostly against the neutral white center and found to be in a relatively uncompromised state, a condition that was probably intentional on Davis' part since the option of placing the primary against a secondary or tertiary color is in no case exercised. Both colors, primary and white, are, however, modified by a number of underlying colors which can not only be seen as present through the top coat but read out at the bottom in numerous multicolored paint runs. This brushy paint is at odds with the hieratic format, a conflict later to be resolved by resorting to sharp-edged uninflected paint. But the most pressing element of ambiguity is a penumbra of darker grayish color around each primary square. These have a disconcerting habit of resembling cast shadows, consequently suggesting that the primary and white rectangles are three-dimensional objects resting on a flat surface, like framed blank canvases on a wall. It is these unresolved qualities that make the paintings complex and rewarding. (Fischbach, *April 23-May 12*)

Gene Davis, Blue Rectangle, 1957. *Oil on primed canvas, 30 x 32". Courtesy Fischbach Gallery.*



Michael Heizer, Vermont, 1977. *Gray granite. Courtesy Xavier Fourcade Gallery.*

MICHAEL HEIZER	Xavier Fourcade
ROBERT ARNESON	Allan Frumkin
RODNEY RIPPS	Brooke Alexander
MAUREEN McCABE/ ALDEN MASSON/ JON FRIEDMAN	Allan Stone
GREGOIRE MÜLLER	Kornblee
STEPHEN LORBER	A.M. Sachs

By ALLEN ELLENZWEIG

MICHAEL HEIZER

This show of seven sculptures in granite, steel, and wood is a further extension of the artist's previous foray into certain geometric permutations derived from the circle. In each of these seven, Heizer presents one parent circle with four offspring, each of whose diameters are half the size of the parent but whose thicknesses are equal to the larger circle. The four are further differentiated by a variety of sliced divisions; thus, in *Vermont*, one smaller circle is cut in half, one has one-eighth cut out, one has one-quarter cut out, and one has three-eighths cut out. The apparently arbitrary stacking of these pieces which may result is part of Heizer's interest, though just how variable this is would seem, certainly, to depend on the weight of materials.

Heizer has named each of the seven pieces for the geographic location from which the materials originated (*Vermont* for its gray granite, *Ghana*, the largest piece, for its Zebrano wood). *Vermont* is perhaps the handsomest piece, especially as seen against the stark setting of the gallery's white and gray courtyard. Conceptual austerity is here granted grandiose realization. (Xavier Fourcade, *May 13-June 11*)

ROBERT ARNESON

Again, from Robert Arneson, come the marvels of ceramic and terra cotta, this time focused solely on the portrait bust. Employing the format of the classical Hermes, Arneson tries out a wide variety of portraits, including one of his dealer, and finds ample ways to engage his comic conceits. Hair and beards, crazed or laughing expressions, hip beat poets like *Ike*, each is treated as a three-dimensional comic character study. *Roy of Port Costa* is one example of the naturalist painting accorded some; there are monochromes as well. Scale becomes a critical feature in this large funky group, as Arneson introduces mammoth heads whose monumentality is alarming and very powerful. (Allan Frumkin, *through May 31*)

RODNEY RIPPS

In his first show at Brooke Alexander, Ripps concerned himself with small, gnarled configurations that, almost organic in effect, 'grew' out from the wall in arthritic gesture. The latest of Ripps' works are more ambitious, more sensual, and of a lusher, more romantic appeal. They are a series of friezes not unlike garden hedges running along the wall in thick, leafy textures. Made of cloth, wax medium and oil, Ripps conjoins in them the worlds of paint and sculpture and composes a number of thickly encrusted horizontal wall reliefs. His palette is dark and verdant with occasional violet or yellow inclusions. The forms arch, bend, and reach in a manner both symphonic and beautifully orchestrated. They nevertheless retain much of Ripps' denser, more mysterious qualities so apparent in the earlier pieces. (Brooke Alexander, *through May 14*)

MAUREEN McCABE/ALDEN MASSON/JON FRIEDMAN

The personal iconography that fills Maureen McCabe's collage works under glass share some of the poetic, ambiguous aroma of Joseph Cornell, but McCabe's is somehow a more lighthearted approach. Her small slate boards are extremely fine lesson plans in the stream-of-consciousness mode of image making; in her *Marguerite Broken/Heart Slate*, diverse materials include playing cards, stencil numbers, a feather, glued stars, and cut-outs of a Cinderella Fifties fashion plate in ballgown, and a man, in similar scale, paying her considerable interest. The rich romantic imagery is complemented by melodramatic hand-written quotations, e.g., "Will you not come back before I die?" In these slate boards, McCabe is equally adept at sparer clusters of bric-a-brac. Her *Ouija Board Slate* is an elegant black field with small triangular mirrors, constellation symbols, a glass eye, and feathers composing the board. It is a work of

Robert Arneson, Roy of Port Costa, 1976. *Polychrome earthenware and glazed ceramic, 34 x 18¾ x 18¾". Courtesy Allan Frumkin Gallery.*

Rodney Ripps, Untitled, 1976. *Cloth, wax medium, and oil. Courtesy Brooke Alexander Gallery.*

pertect understatement. Of her larger three-dimensional collage reliefs, *Carol Lombard with 126 Angels* and *World War II* are marvels of inventive miniature images grouped to advance a Busby Berkely army of delight. McCabe's is high wit given point in a visual world of intimate scale and personal association.

The coagulating stains in Alden Masson's large canvases are developed as densely overlapping irregular shapes. There is a feeling for the organic in Masson's vocabulary, these globules brought to large size, as if under a microscope, in alternating densities, warm color, and horizontal or vertical bias. The overall schema, the bleeding to the edge, effects imagery that is non-hierarchical, and what one must respond to in the work is the variety of veils of color and glazed surfaces which offer a shallow and highly populated spatial adventure.

Jon Friedman's is a wide-ranging sensibility capable of classic landscape images in watercolor, as in his two views of Pittsburgh, or the more abstract, topographical concerns of a piece like *Shimmer*. His small books with collages, reliefs, and Polaroid photos intensify the nature of Friedman's already multi-directional bent. In the books, several themes reoccur: nature, the occult, the surreal, color studies, the topographic and biomorphic. If we can not yet pin the artist down, that is clearly to his benefit, though it prompts an ambiguous response. The books, for all their running off in different directions, are by far the most interesting things exhibited. They allow an investigation into an explosive mind that generates ideas quicker than they are absorbed, understood, or consumed. (Allan Stone, *through April 30*)

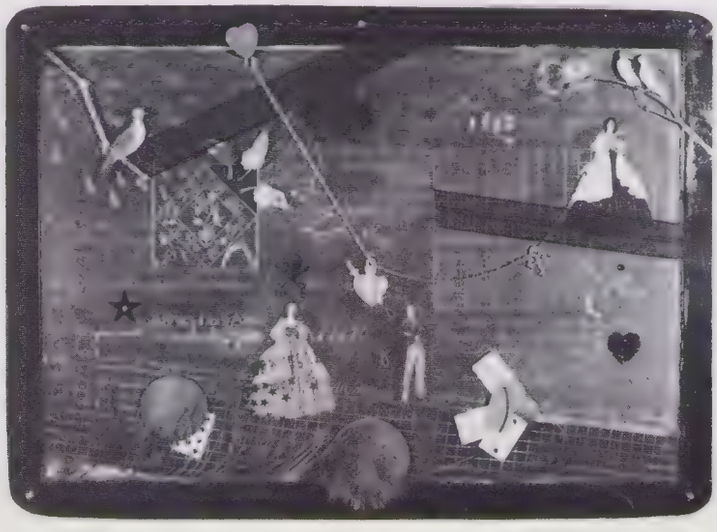
GREGOIRE MÜLLER

The paintings of Gregoire Müller rather openly acknowledge their debt to European painting of the first half of the 20th century, particularly the work of Picasso; the tension of these figurative works can be traced to this aspect of homage. Müller is a painter's painter in the grand manner, alternating his command of rich juicy pigment with accidental drip areas or dried, less opaque passages. His use of the figure is generalized, abstracted, and highly evocative, without ever allowing the interference of literal specificity. This can be seen in *Night Knitter*, a striking portrait of a cross-legged woman cornered in a sort of overstuffed love seat. Müller's expansive drawing allows for the chair to metamorphose into a large, waving shape rather like an elliptical palette, while the figure is composed of swift angular strokes that describe, sparely, the matter of her activity.

In his *Three Figures,* the Picassoid heads and primitive angular figuration achieve for the work ample breadth and focus despite the alternating languid and gyrational poses. But the question of intention remains. Müller's gifts are apparent. There is vitality and rigor to the painting, but the constraints of stylistic influence have yet to set free a more personal abstract vocabulary. (Kornblee, *April 27-May 24*)

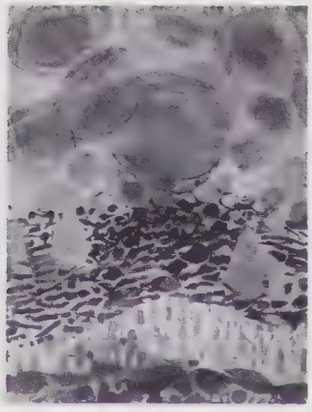
STEPHEN LORBER

The shallow staged spaces of Stephen Lorber's still lifes are given force by an extremely sensitive use of crisp color, rigorously executed feats of drawing and detail, and a feel for compositional organization that is at once intelligent and dramatic. Lorber's world of realistic precision is filled with woven baskets in ocher and sienna resting on raw wood bases. His palette circles around warm earth and golden tones, and the manipulation of artificial light to effect appropriately functional shadows advances an equally abstract order to this nearly trompe-l'oeil realism. The patterns and textures of woven rugs and baskets occupy Lorber's concerns, but mostly as a plastic decorative element in each composition of angled shadows and flat color backdrops. This is theatrical realism of a very high order: luminous and clear in color and drawing, plastically believable, and abstractly integrated. (A.M. Sachs, *April 9-28*)



Maureen McCabe, Marguerite Broken/Heart Slate, 1977. *Slate and mixed media, 12 x 8". Courtesy Allan Stone Gallery.*

BERNARD STERN Carlton
GROUP SHOW David Findlay
DRAWINGS Touchstone
CHRISTOBAL TORAL Staempfli
GROUP SHOW Sid Deutsch



◄ Gustaf Bolin, Grand Nuages Jaunes, 1963. *Oil on canvas, 57½ x 44¾". Courtesy David Findlay Galleries.*

Cair Crawford, Shafts VIII, 1977. *Oil stick and collage on paper, 30 x 22". Courtesy Touchstone Gallery.*

By JANICE GLANDER-BANDYK

BERNARD STERN

Bernard Stone paints a world I would personally like to live in. It's a world of slices of cheese and grapes in tabletop landscapes. The night skies are filled with fruit moons and plum drops. Fruits push and shove through the narrow channel of a tablecloth crease. Although it is a world populated by fruits and existing on tables, it is a very human, very civilized world. It has the scale and sanity of a calmly organized loving world, one in which the most creative forces are unleashed. (Carlton, *May 3-28*)

GROUP SHOW

Gustaf Bolin is a knife painter. He utilizes the knife in a series of amoebic shapes through which he allows the canvas to penetrate. This and his exaggerated aerial perspective give a fantastic quality to his overhead landscapes. Jean-Jacques Morvan is also a knife painter but uses brilliantly colored blocks of paint in an impasto that pervades his harborscapes.

Alexandre Garbell's utilization of dry brush technique and the way he makes a human being or a dense object out of a blob of color make his work seem almost Impressionist. He can make color suggest a shape so that it barely limns under his swirling skies or grayed pastel hues. Michel Rodde achieves the pristine quality that oils have in his Breughel-like mountains. They teem with active color dots the way a group of clamoring peasants would. (David Findlay, *May 12-June 4*)

DRAWINGS

This show might be called "drawings from soup to nuts." As diverse as these individuals are, so is their definition of drawing. Charlotte Shoemaker's wires, patches of paper, metal grids, and shadow drawings question the distinction between sculpture and drawing. Tony Moore's day-glo colors penetrate a grid of graphite color in a field of tight control. Mark Krieger draws with watercolor, full-value blues and mauves, layered on earth colors in a brooding translucent geometricity.

Does David Phillips show assemblage or drawing on real objects? He draws on stones with color pencils and graphite. He draws on paper with stones, color pencils, and graphite. Regarding Frances Heatherington's work, there is an argument that calligraphy is an art form because it still is visually exciting when the meaning of the words is taken away. Since the meaning of Heatherington's words is never available, there is no doubt as to the appeal of her opalescent textures. (Touchstone, *May 3-June 1*)

CRISTOBAL TORAL

In the painting *The Family of Carlos IV, d'apres Goya,* Cristobal Toral alternately makes fun of and pays homage to the 17th century Spanish masters. All of his oils are enveloped in a brooding black atmosphere. In this particular one, if one peruses closely, the figures of nobility may be seen sporting sunglasses and Kodak cameras while carrying soft side luggage.

His still lifes of fruit are somber by comparison. *Strawberries on a Cloth* seems almost tortured by an ominous dark atmosphere. A similar contrast exists between the sensuousity of his painting of a woman bathing and the aloofness of his vantage point. Throughout all the painting there is the soft and resinous luminosity of the Spanish masters. (Staempfli, *May 3-28*)

GROUP SHOW

This is a show of "highlights" from the careers of four artists. Charmion Von Wiegand's circles within circles, triads of triangles, and paths that lead to an inner space mark the work of this artist. In Rita Simon's work, a persistence of quasi-mystical imagery and symbols are repeated and reworked. Her drawings are fascinating in their detail.

Ray Johnson shows mostly black and white collages with small amounts of color interceding. There are emotionally charged tidbits from Nazi Germany. In *Dr. Brute's Fingernails* it seems that he is wreaking vengeance for a painful childbirth. *Mark Rothko's Fingernails* is a black valentine speckled with white "fingernail parings." Clarence Carter's animals have souls the way that objects in a Bergman film become charged with life. They have elevated their consciousness by one step and become anthropomorphic. (Sid Deutsch, *May 14-June 4*)

◄ Bernard Stern, The Beaching of Noah's Ark, 1976. *38 x 48". Courtesy Carlton Gallery*

Cristoba Toral, The Family of Carlos IV, d'apres Goya, 1975. *Oil on canvas, 92½ x 113". Courtesy Staempfli Gallery.*

Robert Rauschenberg, Installation View, 1976. *Courtesy Leo Castelli and Sonnabend Galleries.*

BRIAN WALL Sculpture Now
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG Leo Castelli
MEL RAMOS Louis K. Meisel
GROUP SHOW Susan Caldwell
RONALD MALLORY Bonino
ANITA STECKEL Hansen
GISSON Christopher
FAITH BROMBERG / VICTOR EMALEH Roko
ANDREW MARTIN 4x10
MIRIAM BRUMER Lotus

By WILLIAM ZIMMER

BRIAN WALL

Wall's sculptures are assemblages of grates, pipes, beams, and other industrial materials. They are painted uniformly in sober black or brown to disguise their utilitarian origins but also to heighten an appreciation of their specific contours. Some of the works aspire to anthropomorphism; one pair of pipes resembles an insect's antennae. Others are the rudiments of structures that enclose space rather than objects that thrust into it. Wall's sculptures are very reminiscent of Anthony Caro's most felicitous works, though the latter used bright industrial colors to dazzle. (Sculpture Now, *May 7-28*)

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

In recent years this artist has left everything out, the *Jammers* being the prime example. Perhaps stimulated by his retrospective and the heady, full painting of his trailblazing days, Rauschenberg has put everything in again. Replacing the raucous gestural passages that mark his early works are tighter passages, surely influenced by the elegant geometry of the *Jammers*. Although there is once again a lot going on, it is cleaner. The whole earth catalogue, from arcane imagery to very public signs, is back and actual pendent objects reappear—a rubber raft, chairs, tires, electric lights.

A new space-confounding component is a mat-strip reflector applied in large swatches. In one work, a host of images on a standard faces this dullish mirror and we are compelled, as well, to align ourselves with the images and then pose for the reflector. *Whistlestop* has poignance, a felt sense of place. The artist's familiar gauze is made into the webbing of a deadpan screendoor, such as Artschwager might fashion, and the images allude to small-town America. (Leo Castelli, *April 23-May 23)*

MEL RAMOS

It was inevitable that Ramos would tackle de Kooning. He has been marching through art history transforming its most venerated nudes into California pop images. This is accomplished by substituting silicone sleek bodies and coy Playmate faces for the mysterious feminine icons of painters like Ingres and Manet. With these "de Kooning" translations, an initial feeling is that Ramos is engaging in lily-gilding. After all, de Kooning created tension by collaging a pair of lips from a contemporary cigarette advertisement on archetypally female forms. Ramos' addition of a face around the seductive lips was merely making de Kooning's contribution more obvious.

Yet these paintings are unmistakably homages, since de Kooning's open eroticism broke the ice for painters in America like Ramos. What is finally winning is his deadpan aping of de Kooning's slashing style. The blurred breasts of *I Still Get a Thrill When I See Bill* are the photo-realist equivalent of the action painter's slipping glimpses. It is as if the subject had moved while being photographed. Rauschenberg might also be recalled as a precursor; he produced two identical drip paintings, showing that Abstract Expressionism might sometimes be more mechanical than felt. (Louis K. Meisel, *May 14-28)*

GROUP SHOW

The geometric abstractionists showing here have always seemed second to none in their eagerness to continually vivify standard shapes. Robert Swain's painting is a large grid over which the color is raked—from the palest tints at the lower left to deep purples at the upper right. Robert Duran's painting is a forest of overlapping, jagged forms. Mac Wells gives us a square inside the frame that departs from Albers in that the square is at angles to the picture plane. It is like an opening onto an O'Keeffian desert. Frances Barth's canvas is segmented, but the actual cut seems just another division among other drawn divisions of her elliptic central shape. Joanna Pousette-Dart's painting is permeated by a gauzy quality that is belied by the strong architectonic composition.

Recent work by Paul Rotterdam was featured. The shaft that has been his hallmark now looks and acts like a drilling bit; a welter of graphite lines emphasizes its displacing power. On one drawing are collaged photographs from a contact sheet in which the artist first stands in front of, then is under, a black hood. An accompanying sentence, "After a while I began to realize this wasn't me," becomes unread-

◄ Brian Wall, Cripple Creek, 1976. *Steel, painted, 7'7" x 7'2" x 13'10". Courtesy Sculpture Now.*

Mel Ramos, I Still Get a Thrill When I See Bill. . ., 1975. *Oil on canvas, 80 x 70". Courtesy Louis K. Meisel Gallery.*

Ronald Mallory, Coline, 1976-77. *Oil on canvas, 6'8" x 15'. Courtesy Bonino Gallery.*

able. With additions like this, Rotterdam is bringing to the fore the psychological tensions that have always been implicit in his work. (Susan Caldwell, *May 11- June 4)*

RONALD MALLORY

One is impressed by Mallory's ability to create a color-field painting by convening pink and blue that isn't the least bit sweet. To show that he means business, Mallory has named his recent paintings after medieval poisons. The paintings look as if they were inspired by ceiling decoration in baroque churches. In the largest painting, *Mandrayora,* brown is mingled with pastels; one almost expects to see a Madonna riding these nimbuses. (Bonino, *May 17-June 11)*

ANITA STECKEL

The woman aboard the eagle soars over New York City. She swoops over Picasso in his garden at la Californie, but her big moment comes when she triumphantly interposes her finger between those of God and Adam on the Sistine ceiling. This epic journey occurred on a Xerox machine. Anita Steckel's means are obvious so there is nothing to interfere with her allegorical and, by inference, political content. A master cut-out of woman and eagle is laid atop photographs or reproductions of paintings and the disparate elements are fused together. Sometimes the cut-out is

Gisson, Red Floral, 1977. *Oil on canvas, 20 x 24". Courtesy Christopher Gallery.*

Anita Steckel, Creation Revisited, 1977. *Collage. Courtesy Hansen Gallery.*

moved to blur the image, accentuating the dream quality.

A series of Picasso painting himself yielded a satisfying balance of rectangular forms, the artist's blocky body, and the canvas on the easel. Steckel also made colored money, dollar bills, and pennies coated with enamel. This usually venerated thing became a trifle like penny candy. Steckel doesn't edit herself for the public; an "erotica wall" featured illustrations from a sex manual, embellished with her drawing. Steckel is more effective when alluding rather than stating, yet we are always in the presence of a fully circumscribed life. (Hansen, *April 5-30*)

GISSON

Gisson has mastered the Impressionists's employment of light as a shaper of form, and in their tradition uses popular Impressionist subjects—intimate landscapes, seascapes, even laundresses—as vehicles for his mastery. The seascapes are especially good as he uses quick strokes of color to capture the reflections of the gamboling bathers on the wet beach.

His most striking paintings are quiet studies of vases, white porcelain ones posed with vases bearing blue figuration. His sensitive placement of the vases has something oriental about it and the lacework of shadow cast by the flower petals is pleasing. There are two studies of the face of a wide-eyed ingenue sporting a wide-brimmed hat. The two versions, both nearly bleached by falling light, differ subtly in the width of the smile and tilt of the hat brim. (Christopher, *May 14-June 8*)

FAITH BROMBERG / VICTOR EMALEH

Bromberg continues her exploration of the perennial stand-off between the sexes. In most of her recent paintings men are taking women for a ride; a car with a long hood is the central motif. As Bromberg sees it, the conflict is ineluctably primal. That the dual natures are what moves the world accounts for the women's willingness, though the know better. Sleek animals such as panthers and elephants are witnesses to the drama, but the bestial nature of her human characters which used to be prominent is kept at bay. Her people are uptown and urbane, but the law of the jungle lurks. Reinforcing the content is Bromberg's strong composition. The angular car is a foil to the curvilinear shapes. Each painting is read initially as an abstraction before the narrative content is apprehended.

Bromberg may stir the waters, but a sea change is undergone when viewing Victor Emaleh's exquisite watercolor miniatures. Everything is serene here. There are closeups of marine life in which the transluscent forms float across each other, and landscapes in which a long vista is intimated. (Roko, *May 1-28*)

ANDREW MARTIN

Large trees dominate Martin's paintings of suburbs. The network of branches subdivides the vista behind the tree into many mosaic-like parts, while picket fences serve as barriers and distance markers. Martin is faithful to traditional tenets of perspective, positing fore-, middle- and background, but at the same time everything is drawn to the tree. It is almost a surrogate for the human figure. The most impressive painting is a full-length, nude self-portrait. Like the tree, the artist has a noble bearing and also a thoughtful mien, revealing his identification with the natural world, but also a concern with a philosophy about that world. (4x10, *May 7-28*)

MIRIAM BRUMER

The starting point for Miriam Brumer's paintings is an intimate look at natural forms such as sea shells or, lately, butterflies. She might further reduce her area of concentration on these small subjects by focusing, in the case of a butterfly, on the point of contact of the wing with the thorax. Occupying large canvases some sense of the butterfly remains, but specific reference dissolves into lustrous abstraction. From the particular, universal associations grow as with Dove or O'Keeffe. The butterfly is especially congenial with Brumer's methods as it undergoes metamorphosis. Some butterflies are wholly recognizable, looming large and hovering menacingly as Dali might show them. When it is present by indirection, the butterfly becomes rivulets of color inspired by its wings. (Lotus, *April 15-May 13*)

KES ZAPKUS	Paula Cooper
EILEEN SPIKOL	SoHo 20
DIANE KAROL	55 Mercer
JOE BREIDEL	John Weber
STEPHEN ANTONAKOS	John Weber
PATTY LARRICK	Razor
ALAN COTE	Cuningham Ward
MILTON RESNICK	Max Hutchinson
DAVID TRUE	Edward Thorp
THREE ARTISTS	Carl Solway
BILL SPENCER	Razor
LOUISE FISHMAN	Nancy Hoffman
URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD	55 Mercer
DONNA BYARS	A.I.R.

By ELLEN LUBELL

KES ZAPKUS

The look of Zapkus' paintings seemed the same—scatterings of colored markings in a gridded color field, all partially obscured by the topmost layer of the dominant color. There were a few differences in the paintings in his most recent show. In each there were two grids, or one basic grid plus sets of parallel lines. The colored markings were larger and solid, like pieces of confetti torn from pieces of colored paper. The second grid, in one of the confetti colors, is at a different angle than the one obviously the primary grid, which is parallel to the edges of the canvas.

For example, in one group of four canvases, *Traffic* (1967-77), that are parallelograms, one set of parallel lines approximates the perpendicular, while the fundamental grid remains true to its own framework's edges. *Duo* (1976-77), a pair of pastel canvases, and *Search for Tiepolo* (1976) both have whole second grids; *Raceway* (1976-77), in addition to *Traffic,* makes do with the parallels in one or two directions. The grids are guides and mis-guides through the confusion of the showers of colored marks. Zapkus' colors ranged from bright primaries to rich, deep reds and airy but definite pastels. The artist maintained his painting format in this show, proving it viable by infusing changes that were innovative without being destructive. (Paula Cooper, *April 16-May 11*)

EILEEN SPIKOL

Spikol's work retained the primitive-zoological-anthropological references seen in her previous work, here through the use of bone formations as her starting points. *World Without End* (1976) was the biggest and best piece in the show. Thin sticks of charred wood about 7½ feet tall leaned against the wall in twos and fours. Dangling from them were resin and fiberglas casts of bones—spinal column pieces, long bones, vertebrae, and others that looked like strange pelvic bones, or horns. This work, with elements of both the primitive and contemporary, looked like a totem, or a shaman's set of magical sticks.

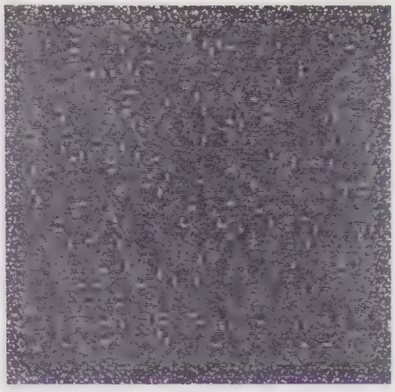
Most of the significant work was on the floor. Two pieces consisted of cast skulls (horse, or perhaps cattle) in resin and fiberglas in a variety of colors. In one piece they were aligned one slightly beneath the other, while in the other they were compactly standing on edge, one inside the other, forming an arch. The skulls are fascinating objects from which to cast, but in these two works, it seems that once the idea was hit upon to use the skulls, the fact of the skullness was ignored. (SoHo 20, *April 30-May 25*)

DIANE KAROL

Karol's canvas wall works have taken a further evolutionary step. Her rectangular pieces of canvas—colored with acrylics applied with lots of water with her hands, spray guns, sponges, and brush in stripes, stains, plumes, and blotches—were still arranged on the wall with a leaning toward stratification, that is horizontally, overlapping in uneven rectangles, alternating wide and narrow.

In one work, the five sections were arranged so that two inner ones functioned as verticals; they were the same canvas panels, but positioned higher and lower than the other three, which formed a continuous, straight horizontal line along the wall. Her other work was of only four sections; one rose higher than

Kes Zapkus, Raceway, 1976-77. *Vinyl screen, acrylic, and oil on canvas, 7 x 7'. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery.*



Joe Breidel, The Water's Edge, 1975. *Photograph, 16¼ x 20¼". Courtesy John Weber Gallery.*

the rest, and one sank much lower. These "verticals" are the last remnants of the tall painted canvas cylinders she showed several years ago. Karol also showed collage studies of watercolor, watercolor pencil, colored pencils, and collaged material on fiberglas paper in which shiny fibers were visible, giving these compositions a surprising texture. (55 Mercer, *April 23-May 11*)

JOE BREIDEL

Breidel showed two groups of works. In one, color photographs of the ocean and sky from the shore each contained a play on the water/air skyline as a surface, or as a line. A tip of a tongue touches the line, the water level of a goldfish bowl coincides with it, as does the water level inside the glass heel of a woman's shoe, scissors cut along the line, etc.

The second series of works were on handmade paper mounted on rag board. Black and white photographs of the sea and sky were bent at the skyline so that one half of the picture was adhered to the paper while the other half was lifted at an angle. Underneath this portion of the photo was a metal plate that formed the card's shadow. In a unique work, the metal was formed into an envelope, adhered to the paper, and contained a colored sea-sky photograph. (John Weber, *April 20-May 7*)

STEPHEN ANTONAKOS

The theme of Antonakos' latest show of neon sculptures and related works on paper was fragments. Three neon works, all on walls painted in a color, described geometric shapes via fragments of those shapes. Fragments of a circle were described by deep red neon shapes on a light blue wall with a touch of gray in the color. The very small curved arc fragments minimally described a few large circles.

Another work was of four much larger arcs, in standard neon red on a wall painted with a reddish hue. The third work was the fragment of a square, a tilted right angle formed by two of the square's sides, on a green wall in the same neon red. The artist's works on paper, in a number of media, explored different arrangements of the fragments, creating a large number of two-dimensional designs from the fragment concept. (John Weber, *April 20-May 7*)

PATTY LARRICK

Larrick's paintings were oil washes on treated, unstretched, long canvas rectangles. She draws in rectangles that follow the verticality of the canvas pieces. The painted segments within each drawn rectangle are horizontal, their position and often the straightness of their lines determined by creases in the fabric that were found (results of the canvas being rolled as a bolt) or created by Larrick. The painting itself combines rectangles of slanted linear markings with rectangles of flat color. Grayed or subdued colors dominated, and blank spaces interrupted the series of painted rectangles in several works. The artist's drawings in colored pencil on paper, in soft colors, fared better than the larger paintings, achieving textures and color control not seen in the bigger works. (Razor, *April 23-May 11*)

ALAN COTE

Utilizing rectangular forms and lines that intersect like lattices, Cote created very large abstract paintings. His very intense colors varied in flatness and solidity, some thin and revealing underpainting beneath. Each composition used just a few colors; in several they served as both blocky background and lattice, piercing the spaces established by the other colors. One detects subtleties of color after a period of looking, yet the colors seem not to interact as much as they should. (Cuningham Ward, *April 15-May 12*)

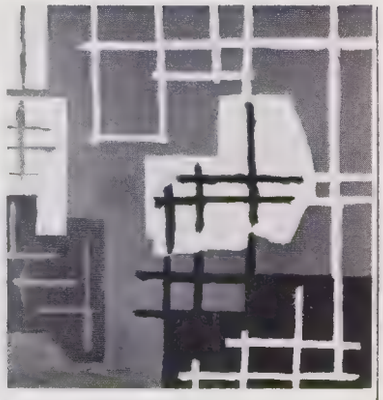
MILTON RESNICK

These paintings were created since the artist's return to New York in 1974. Resnick loads his canvas with oil paint, creating works in which the painting surface, and one's sense of it, has all but disappeared. Though the artist seems to disclaim positive and negative illusions, claim-

Diane Karol, Blind Pass, 1977. *Acrylic on canvas, 17'8" x 8'. Courtesy 55 Mercer Gallery.*

Stephen Antonakos, Four Incomplete Neon Circles, 1976. *Neon, 57 x 63". Courtesy John Weber Gallery.*

Alan Cote, Untitled, 1977. *Acrylic on canvas, 90 x 84". Courtesy Cunningham Ward.*



ing these works are all positive, the topographical nature of the surface in itself is a positive-negative, though indeed one cannot see "past" the surface of paint. The surfaces range from fluffy cake frosting to hilly fields or lava fields. They are moist rather than granular, and one hesitates to go near them, fearing that they are still wet.

The paintings are virtually monochromes with bits of other hues swirled in more than unobtrusively, but in concordance with the wholes. In a few compositions, the colors were worked more methodically, almost like plaids or patchwork. Resnick once again proved himself among the most dextrous in the handling and vocabulary of oil paint. (Max Hutchinson, *April 26 through June 30*)

DAVID TRUE

In his recent paintings, True continues with his mystical images of a dark, angular boat hull rising out of a dark, turbulent sea under equally strange, dark cloudy skies. The inanimate hulls ride the waves passenger-less, as dark silhouettes. His palette is wonderfully otherworldly, utilizing deep luminous blues, algae greens.

Chinese Sea (1977) is an exception as the sky is a glaring yellow in which the clouds almost get lost; the swelling sea is a deep, velvety green. *Green Ocean* and *Blue Ocean* are boatless. These compositions appear to be tangents the artist wanted to explore, thinking about the ocean waves and swells as a mountain network. The most deviant of the group is *Topiary Swans,* in which shrubbery sculpted in the form of those birds is silhouetted against a light sky. True is obviously a thoughtful painter, willing to follow his ideas though they take him away from the familiar. (Edward Thorp, *May 3-21*)

THREE ARTISTS

Rod Carswell, Renee du Bois, and Jeff Way shared the gallery space, showing work that varied widely but held together to provide an interesting show. Carswell showed works of acrylic and rhoplex on canvas. They were very thin cutouts, rectilinear structures with gridded surfaces and gray striated colors. Each contained at least one clear rhoplex panel where pigment had not been added, both piercing the works and adding a sense of volume.

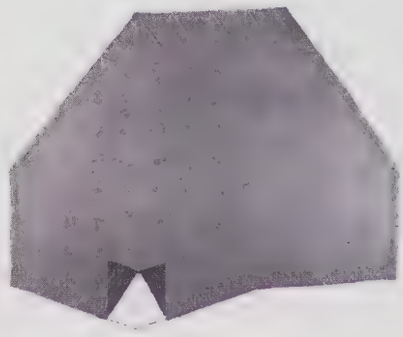
Du Bois' mixed-media wall construction was like a line drawing. Found objects and wire were mixed, the wire twisted, forming grids and ladders or threaded with small found bits of wood or pebbles. The only constructed object was a small cage with an open door that housed a rock. Trailing from the cage was a ladder that developed into two wires, one of which was anchored to the floor by a pile of polyurethane fettucini. Her three mixed-media sculptures, on stands nearby, were eccentric and amusing. Way's *Portraits for Kurt Schwitters* were 11 small paintings, primarily black and white, of faces appropriately distorted, features pulled this way and that. He also showed two masks, one of white with a black pear shape painted over the minimal features. The other mask was horned. (Carl Solway, *April 28-May 21*)

BILL SPENCER

For his first show in New York, this California artist showed a number of works in the earth work-conceptual mode. The major work of the show is *A Reordered Tree,* in which a pine tree was cut down and its elements recombined, categorized, almost restructured. Pine needles were gathered in nets suspended on tripods of branches, cones were gathered under a little table of wood (rendered from the tree), twigs, plank-pieces, branches, trunk segments were organized in or on structures created from the tree. Photos were shown of the site, although that of the original tree was not included. Spencer showed other works, including photos and other documentation of events and activities. One composition involved photos of the phases of deterioration of a sheet of sheetrock, a sample of which was mounted in a box with glass for protection. Other works were about wind and sand, killing flies, etc. (Razor, *May 14-June 1*)

David True, Japanese Sea, 1977. *Oil on canvas, 44 x 66". Courtesy Edward Thorp Gallery.*

Rod Carswell, Shelter Shape, 1976. *Acrylic on canvas, 50½ x 61½".* *Courtesy Carl Solway Gallery.*



Louise Fishman, It's Good To Have Limits, 1977. *Oil and wax on paper, 31 x 23". Courtesy Nancy Hoffman Gallery.*

Francisco Zuñiga, Elena, The Sculptor's Wife, 1976. *Bronze, 75". Courtesy Sindin Gallery.*

LOUISE FISHMAN

Fishman showed small rectangular paintings of oil and wax on paper, each consisting of a framing field and an arrangement of rectangular shapes within. These varied in how much of the whole surface the arrangements occupied and in their look of solidity. In several compositions, the paint handling, color, and overall shape inferred it was a window we were looking through, though the exterior was never on the other side. Sometimes it seemed we were looking into a box-like construction, seeing its interior shape. At other times the configuration looked more like a floating construction of planar rectangles, similar to screens.

Few of the paintings were colorful; most were in grays and whites with hints of subdued color. Paint was handled roughly though with control in thick, dry-looking layers. The works were unframed and unmounted, and the paper waved and curled with the weight of the oil and wax. This made them look all of a piece, rather than on something. The paintings were unified and conceived well enough to project a sense of conceptual fulfillment. (Nancy Hoffman, *May 7-June 2*)

URSULA VON RYDINGSVARD

Von Rydingsvard's unusual sculptures were of cedar 4x4s laminated and cut to taper at the top. The main grouping was of nine forms, hollow and open at the top and bottom. They were soft, freestanding cones with their tops blown out. They also looked like irregular, long skirts, billowed out and standing without the aid of their occupants. The odd shapes were suggestive of the organic, looking like they were reaching up. She also showed a similar, shorter, wider piece with a much larger opening at the top. This had a piece of wood within that looked like a ramp or a snow drift. The whole looked like a volcano.

Von Rydingsvard also included a grouping of four pairs of wooden sticks, each squared with carefully cut sides. At a varying point along each stick, there is a protuberance, a relatively rounded thickening, longer than wide. They were eight giant chopsticks with tumors; the metaphor was inescapable. The artist's work was extremely well crafted, and certainly some of the most original sculpture in the medium seen throughout the season. (55 Mercer, *May 14-June 1*)

DONNA BYARS

For her first show at the A.I.R. Gallery, Byars showed a collection of small sculptures assembled from found objects. The objects are chosen for their visual and tactile qualities; she is attracted to the organic and dense, not polished materials like paint and plastic. The objects used include antlers, bones, wood, stuffed and other soft, stained objects, most found on trips to Maine. *Swathed* was a wrapped object nestled in an oyster shell on beautiful feathers, all on an oblong wrapped object, like a tiny ironing board: a nestled mystery. *Rabbit Pen—A Reclamation* was a small construction of wood and other materials that formed a cage for a tiny, bandaged toy rabbit. *Vested Relic* was another small cage, wrapped with a white cloth. Looking inside, one found a metal wing and an abalone or other iridescent sea shell.

Byars combines her elements for the evocative quality they obtain when brought together. This is most apparent in her collages that utilize black glass plate negatives, ghostly images she refers to as "Angels of Death." They are rather like dream images in their inability to be completely discerned but with their power to evoke certain moods and to spark certain associations. The layered images, of figures and other patterns, are darkly mysterious and seem to hold a revelation. (A.I.R, *April 30-May 25)*

Chaim Gross, Angels Appearing to Abraham, 1976-77. *Bronze, 21½".* *Courtesy Forum Gallery.*

Ursula von Rydingsvard, Cedar, 1977. *Cedar, 3 x 13½ x 14½'.* *Courtesy 55 Mercer.*

CHAIM GROSS	Forum
ELIZABETH OSBORNE	Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer
BORIS VALENTINOVICH SCHERBAKOV	Hammer
FRANCISCO ZUÑIGA	Sindin
NIIZUMA	Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer
DRAWINGS AND SCULPTURES	Kraushaar
WILLIAM PELLICONE	47 Bond St.
BIBLICAL AND MYTHIC THEMES	47 Bond St.
WLADIMIR POLITANO	Clay
GALERIE CONTEMPORAINE	Prakapas

Boris Valentinovich Scherbakov, Spring Morning, 1977. *Oil on panel, 12½ x 16½".* *Courtesy Hammer Galleries.*

By GORDON BROWN

CHAIM GROSS

Gross is known for the quality of his work and as a direct carver in sculpture. He studied with Robert Laurent who had used the direct method as early as 1913. William Zorach carved in this way even earlier. Gross' first direct carvings were roughly hewn and contained no voids. Working with clay, a sculptor could copy all the nuances of nature. Direct carving, on the other hand, led to the invention of new forms, simplifications, and distortions. In the realm of the human figure, direct carving led to new idealizations, new images of nature.

Gross' ideal figure was the well rounded, thin-waisted European acrobat, playful, joyous, and adolescent. He had seen such circus gymnasts during his youth in Austria. Religious subjects, such as *Jacob's Ladder*, have in the past few years enabled him to escape these circus performers that continually repeated the same rounded shape. In *Jacob's Ladder*, blocky planes lead our eyes upward to greater spirituality. The exhibition at the gallery featured small works. Also, a retrospective was held at the Jewish Museum. (Forum, *May 21-July 1*)

ELIZABETH OSBORNE

Elizabeth Osborne displays watercolors that express the qualities of the medium by oppositions as well as affinities. The nature of the medium seems to have been discovered by English artists, such as Turner, who bathed their watercolors in translucent and transparent washes, and absorbed excess moisture with blotting paper or damp brushes. With a laudable love for experimentation and rebellion against accepted standards, Osborne paints flat opaque areas of color right in the middle of her transparent washes. The contrast between the gouache, in which white appears as a pigment, and transparent washes, in which the paper only is used for white, seems surprisingly to emphasize the qualities of transparent watercolors: delicacy, fragility, and free brushwork. Usually Osborne drybrushes over the washes, producing a top layer of paint that is more transparent, light, and airy than even a true wash. (Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer, *June 4-July 2*)

BORIS VALENTINOVICH SCHERBAKOV

From Scherbakov's paintings, direct from Moscow, one learns that a Russian stream in winter looks very much like its counterpart in New England. The artist studied landscape painting at the Institute of Art, Sculpture, and Architecture of the All Russian Academy of Arts. He received his diploma in 1939. He now specializes in painting the homes of the great Russian writers and composers, producing works of documentary value. One realizes, for example, how isolated many of the Russian noblemen were on their large estates. (Hammer, *May 10-June 4*)

FRANCISCO ZUÑIGA

Zuñiga's father, a maker of *santos*, or religious images, was his first art teacher. The son has also picked up a great deal of anatomical knowledge. In his drawing *Ancient Woman*, one sees clearly the humerus embedded in the flesh, and thinks of the anatomical drawings of da Vinci. In composition he may have studied the pottery of the Indians in Costa Rica and Mexico and sought the secret of their rhythmic lines. A favorite device of his is to unify the diverse elements of his design by means of an overall silhouette. The long wraps worn by the women of Central America envelop the bronze, *Two Women Standing*, from head to toe. In *Maternity*, the blackness of the marble helps to silhouette the mother's body as it encloses and protects the baby. This piece is particularly beautiful because it shows the sculptor's admiration for the structure of an Indian woman's profile, and respect for her endurance and strength. (Sindin, *April 30-May 28*)

NIIZUMA

Reason and chance interlock, as if opposed; while the pyramids—Khufu, Sneferu, Menkaura—rise from Earth and Rock. Hoping to solve the mystery of the pyramids, the sculptor splits each pyramid down the middle to find what is inside. The flat inner planes of the pyramid have been polished to bring out the beauty of the colors in the rock: verde antico from Vermont, travertine from Iran, nero marquina from Spain, and many marbles from Italy. The insides of the pyramids are rough, as in nature, or smooth, as in art. Niizuma's rough accidental textures are just as beautiful as his artfully polished marbles. Science and art can work together, and reason can combine with chance. (Gimpel & Weitzenhoffer, *April 26-May 28*)

DRAWINGS AND SCULPTURES

A *Seated Nude* offers a good example of Gaston Lachaise's intelligent approach to drawing. Despite the massive volumes, the artist's basic concept is an organic shape drawn flatly and placed parallel to the picture plane. Since shading is omitted, shapes that overlap and dark and light lines take its place. The dark and light lines can also be described as thick and

David Cantine, Three Jars, 1973. *Enamel and acrylic on canvas, 7¾ x 10".* Courtesy *Kraushaar Galleries.*

thin, or as advancing and receding lines. Cast in bronze, such a work would have the presence of Concetta Scaravaglione's standing figure nearby, which is eight feet high.

David Cantine, a relative newcomer to the gallery, paints and draws disks with the intensity of a Delacroix. But instead of representing passion, death, or some other Romantic ideal subject, Cantine paints abstract circles with such force that they become objects in their own right. His works are studies of the qualities he becomes involved with when he paints and draws. (Kraushaar, *May 24-June 17*)

WILLIAM PELLICONE

One function of composition is to lead the viewer's eye away from the unimportant toward the important parts of a picture. A veteran composer, Pellicone knows how to attract the eye by means of contrast, one basic reason why some of his paintings have such power. In his oil *Maria*, the straight lines of the wall set off the curves of the chair and of the woman, both important focal points. The curves of her wrists and the dreamy expression of the face are particularly feminine. Pellicone likes to show the different sides of an object, which helps the viewer understand structure, even if unconsciously. Choosing a view of a potted plant, he paints what is below as well as above eye level. His watercolors and drawings were also on view. (47 Bond St., *through June 12*)

BIBLICAL AND MYTHIC THEMES

Herbert Leopold, the sculptor, and Richard McBee, Anthony Siani, and Jacob Silberman have turned to the work of the Renaissance for inspiration. The sculptures are knowledgeable, academic, and full of agile movement. The painters in this group are on the right track in relying on the best models from the past, but might develop their ability to sketch from life. They showed good judgment in choosing a theme in which there is increasing interest. (47 Bond St., *May 1-21*)

WLADIMIR POLITANO

A recent arrival in this country, Wladimir Politano studied in Rome and lived in Venezuela for a number of years. As a visitor to strange lands, he could have been influenced by many styles. His painting, *Cry of a Spy*, has the mystery of an Egyptian relief, although its one visible eye could have been fashioned by Brancusi. The influence of Surrealism, Cubism, and Abstract Expressionism is also occasionally apparent. But all these influences are normal and never blatant.

Politano's work is typically calligraphic and linear. When he makes a drawing in pen and ink, he completes the forms without lifting his pen from the paper. He follows much the same procedure in mixed-media paintings. In the *Cry of a Spy*, the brushstrokes create a variety of textural effects, depending upon how charged the brushes were. Since Politano is a *premier-coup* painter who never corrects or modifies his work, he always retains the feeling of the first compositional lines drawn on the canvas. There is a spontaneity and freshness about his best work that the alternative method of slowly building up volumes on canvas would eliminate. Politano's sculpture also depends more on line and calligraphy than on volume. (Clay, *June 14-July 5*)

GALERIE CONTEMPORAINE

This collection of woodburytypes, made between 1876 and 1884, features portraits of famous writers, artists, and politicians. The photographers represented include Adam-Salomon, Bertall, Carjat, Franck, Mulnier, Nadar, and Pierre Petit. Their sitters faced the new invention of the camera with a certain trepidation. For example, the famous writer, Edmond de Goncourt, has been visibly caught by surprise in an ungainly pose. Sometimes the sitter, when he looked stern and forbidding, must have turned the tables and frightened the photographer. As if to make up for this, a number of sensitive, aesthetic-looking faces peer at us from inside their frames: George Sand, Charles Garnier (the architect of the Paris opera). Speaking of frames, some works have been decorated with prints that act as mats or illustrations. A mixture of etchings, steel engravings, woodcuts, and photographs results that recalls contemporary collages. (Prakapas, *June 9-July7*)

ALBERT TERRIS Gloria Cortella
ERNEST BRIGGS Aaron Berman
JASHA GREEN Gloria Cortella
RICHARD KARP Viridian
GROUP SHOW Genesis
LAUREN LINDSAY Viridian
MARIA LASSNIG Gloria Cortella
HERB AACH Aaron Berman
MARCELLE LAPOW TOOR Viridian
LINDA GRAVES Sixth Estate
CAROL HAMOY Viridian
JOSEPH HIJUELOS Sixth Estate

By MARGARET POMFRET

ALBERT TERRIS

Terris' open-formed constructions of low carbon steel weld together "an adventure of material, tool, subject and association." Words, positive and negative shapes, relief and cut-out patterns combine to build either solid, stable sculptures or stacked components on pedestals that, when set up on accommodating frames, reveal their hidden story. Most interesting is his straight sculpture, particularly *For Crying Out Loud #2*. This shoulder-high piece resembles an imaginative graphic press; its extended parts, though static, appear about to move. The sense of harnessed motion coupled with manageable size cause a direct and personal response. One can imagine it composing Terris' own, singular vocabulary. (Gloria Cortella, *April 23-May 13*)

ERNEST BRIGGS

The forms Ernest Briggs creates with his wide, thick swashes of paint resemble giant oriental ideographs of gates, doorways, and arches. Continually involved with the "use of paint" he succeeds, through his heavy textures and broad, sweeping brushstrokes, in investing this current work with a rhythmic energy. While there is a certain muddiness to the intermingling of some of his colors, Briggs' ordering of them is such that he effects an overwhelming involvement with his spatial planes. One peers through vistas in some paintings, while in others the form captures and the eye is commanded to investigate the surface. (Aaron Berman, *April 30-May 24*)

JASHA GREEN

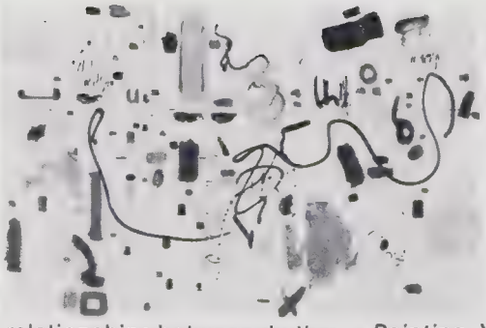
There is a consummate unity between Green's collages, gouache or oil paintings, his cold rolled steel, and/or cor-ten constructions. His bent, cut, folded, interlocking, and overlapping forms in earthy oxides, siennas, and subtle ochers create strong, solid dimensional compositions. Controlled kinetics, concentrated movement, particularly at the edges of each form, engage one in the conditions of space versus boundary, entrance versus exit. The colors of the canvases translate into the coloration possibilities of steel; the shapes of each cause a dynamic give and take between all works. One's involvement with Green's sculpture is not so much tactile as spatial. Their deft balance and poised accommodation with the surrounding space and the interplay of cast shadow and solid substance compel the viewer's attention to both the parts and the whole. (Gloria Cortella, *June 4-25*)

RICHARD KARP

Duck, raw or white painted, serves as the tonal base upon which Karp plays the notes of his visual symbolism, keyed to poetic, musical, or mathematical imagery. Using electric, high-pitched colors counterpointed by quieter hues, he draws and paints signs and symbols as he composes the pictorial whole. Involved with notations of the rational and irrational, Karp continues to explore in this current work his continuing interest in the process of synthesizing dichotomies. (Viridian, *May 3-20*)

GROUP SHOW

Four South American artists are represented in this group show, each worth seeing for the diverse ways they represent their visual worlds. Luis Solari offers a complex imagery, seemingly immersed in fable and fantasy. Anthropomorphic animals dress in tuxedos, smoke cigars, cavort at carnivals. All give witness to telling interpretations of the human condition. Rudy Ayora uses plastic to form handsome, three-dimensional



Richard Karp, A Line That Smiles, 1976. *Oil and mixed media on canvas, 32½ x 21". Courtesy Viridian Gallery.*

relationships between rhythm, light, and color. His kinetic creations result in an elegant geometry of outward stability and inner motion.

With strong rectangular structure and simple tonalities of black to white, Nemesio Antunez creates an eerie, ominous world of stadiums, tunnels, and cities peopled by a multitude of crumb-sized figures. Juan Mele's non-objective paintings are made up of essentially pure, abstract form—lines, rectangles, and squares—and direct, flat colors. Spatial depth and a rhythmic beat reminiscent of Mondrian are fashioned by the interplay of strong surface diagonals that appear to ride above the horizontal grids and rectangles of the background. (Genesis, *May 6-17*)

LAUREN LINDSAY

Working in tonal variations of analogous colors, though occasionally using a complimentary palette, Lindsay composes patterns that give one the sense of still lifes seen through a diffusing pane of glass or some gauze-like material. One feels that somehow the objects should be instantly recognizable, but their subtle distortion and abstraction cause them to evade identification. The clues are in the titles; the game of discovery is fun to play. See especially *Edge Painting Yellow Sieve* for its radiant, light-filled oranges and yellows accented by a bluish-green, and the warm earthy pinks and sand tones of *Sing in the Shower.* (Viridian, *May 7-26*)

MARIA LASSNIG

The figures Lassnig investigates in her paintings stand alone or in relationship to some animal, bird, or fish. Not dependent upon superfluous props or information, they are directly and clearly presented against a simple wash background. The disconcertingly pleasing, sensitive, and generous colors belie the artist's subjective exploration of her subjects. Her rendering incorporates a sense of the surreal, investing her work with both a fresh and an eerie feeling. She creates an effective tension between a captured, introspective moment and the reality of her pictorial presentation. (Gloria Cortella, *May 14-June 3*)

HERB AACH

Pulsating colors radiate from the pivotal axis Aach uses in this carefully ordered series of *Split Infinity* paintings. Each canvas is the same size and is spaced at even intervals from its neighbor. Here the circle, in a configuration of halos, acts as the plotting device for the sequential serialization of Aach's light-spectrum governed hues. Slipping his color relationships over one ring and curving a new starting line in each piece, Aach achieves an intricate, chromatic progression from one work to the next. Not satisfied with shapes aligned within a picture frame, his balloon out from the edges of his paintings and surge into the surrounding space. His show is both a visual and intellectual tour-de-force. (Aaron Berman, *May 26-June 25*)

MARCELLE LAPOW TOOR

Toor pours and stains the surface of her canvas with acrylic and enamel to create her current *Earth Bubble* series. Composing with somewhat acidy, electric colors—thalo greens and blues, high purples—she creates a turbulent mass that pushes up through the center portion of her paintings to then seek its horizontal equilibrium. These are strong works and there is interesting textural contrast between the glossy enamel and the more subtle stained patterns. Her small gouache, enamel, and acrylic *Mythology* series is more delicate and the spatial handling more adroit and intriguing. There is a lovely interplay between the washes and the opaque medium in these ancient-appearing works. (Viridian, *May 21-June 9*)

LINDA GRAVES

The sources of Graves' large mask-like images are paper cut-outs of Chinese opera characters. Using a stencil-air brush technique, she positions her figures centrally on the canvas, surrounding them with various extended theatrical appendages—ribbons, curliques, tassels, furs, and feathers—to create the dramatic effect of enlarged puppets arrested in the midst of their dramatic portrayals. While her large pieces are forceful, it is her ink and watercolor drawings done on a continual role of paper that are most intriguing. While each face here is separate, the combined impression is of an ancient scroll seen with contemporary eyes. (Sixth Estate, *April 19-May 8*)

CAROL HAMOY

Bright, clear, radiant colors drench the objects of Hamoy's paintings, people in pairs or alone. Solidly composed, her images are firmly planted in their own space and confidently welcome you into their captured moment. While her titles—*Bowtie, Parrot Shirt, Pockets*—belie her interest in her subjects, her unusual and glowing colors suggest, rather, that she is their vigorous champion. Her well-filled canvases are welcome visions of good picture making and shine with airy, good humor. (Viridian, *April 16-May 5*)

JOSEPH HIJUELOS

Using rhoplex and acrylic in traditional glazing techniques, Hijuelos achieves lovely, muted colors that have a lustrous, mica-like iridescence. He anchors these vapors of suspended, blended hues to the reality of the picture plane by window pane grids and gives to his elegant, solid rectangles a curious ethereal quality. An atmosphere is created: sunsets, dawns, dusks, and sunrises emerge and tranquilly intrude upon the viewer. (Sixth Estate, *May 10-29*)

Maria Lassnig, Learn to Fly, 1976. *Oil on canvas, 70 x 50". Courtesy Gloria Cortella.*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

In the article, "Against A Newer Laocoon," published in the April issue of your magazine by Barbara Cavaliere and Robert C. Hobbs, the authors say the following: "Newman's interest primarily manifested itself during these early years in the realm of polemics rather than in painting."

This statement is false. It is completely disproved by Mr. Hobbs himself who asked me for the loan of six works by Barnett Newman from *these early years* for an exhibition he is doing called *Early Abstract Expressionism.*

As if to try to perpetuate this myth, in the article the authors, although they discuss the work of his contemporaries at great length, never discuss or even mention the work of Barnett Newman. However, they quote the *Foreword* he wrote in January 1947 for *The Ideographic Picture,* an exhibition held at the Betty Parsons Gallery at that time but they never intimate in any way that there were works by Barnett Newman in that exhibition, just as there had been in other exhibitions at the Betty Parsons Gallery before that time.

Annalee (Mrs. Barnett) Newman

Agnetti *Image of an Exhibition*

Arakawa *For Example*

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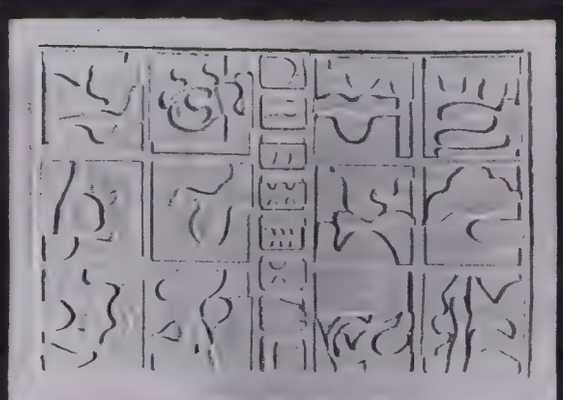

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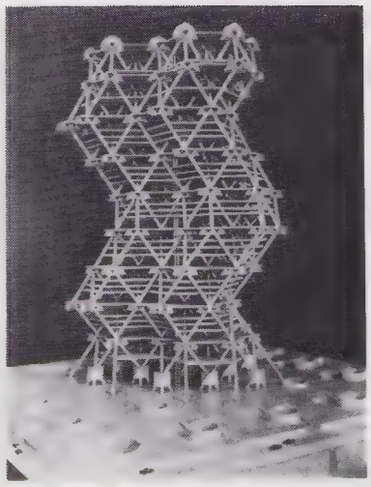

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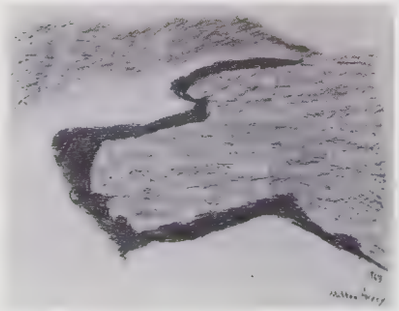

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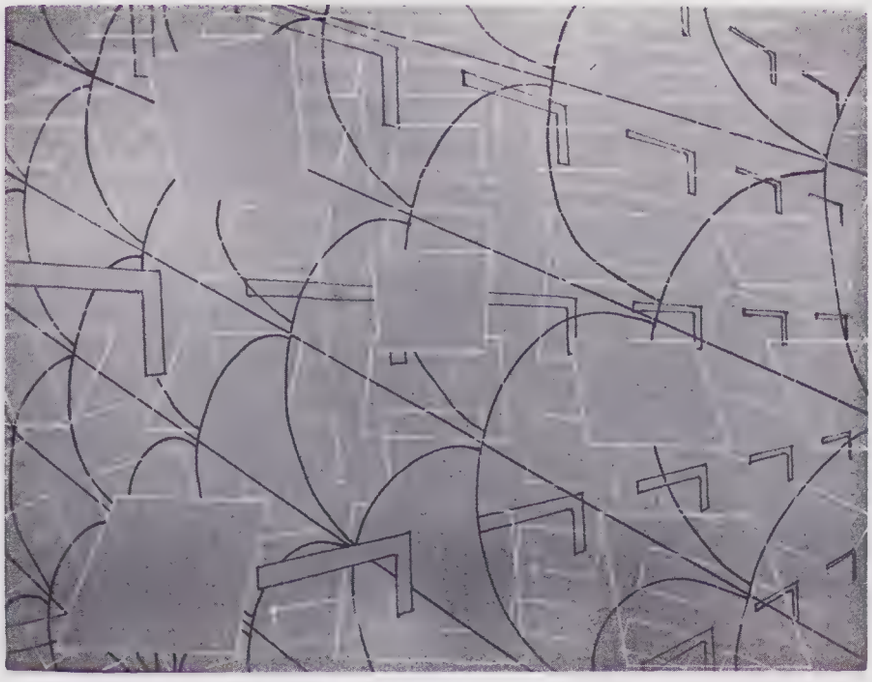

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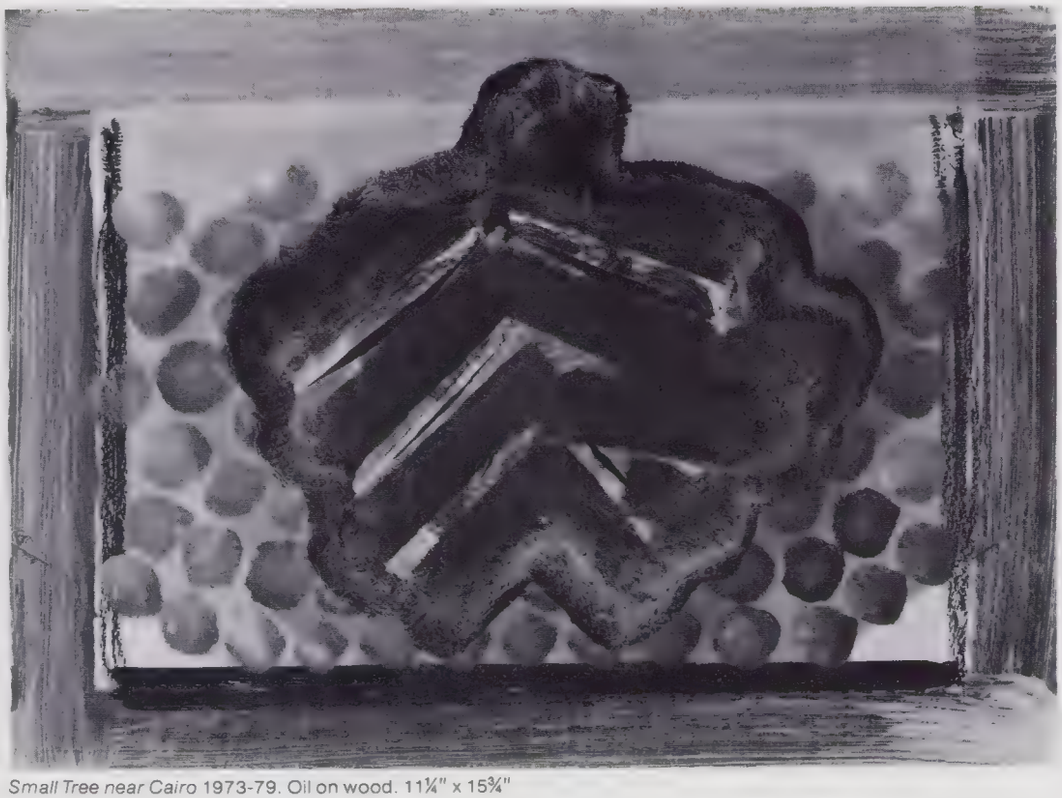

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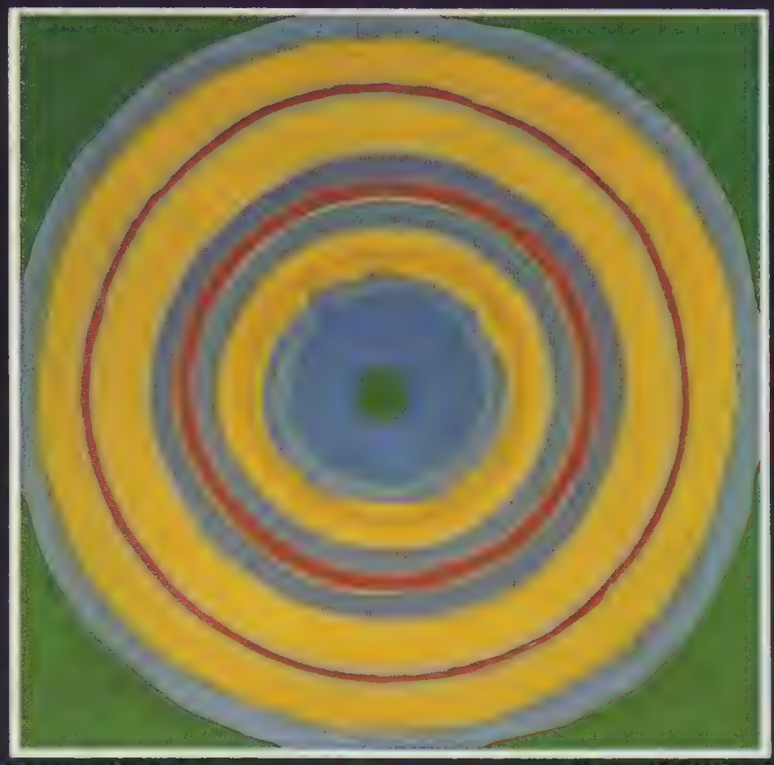

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Male Study
Pencil
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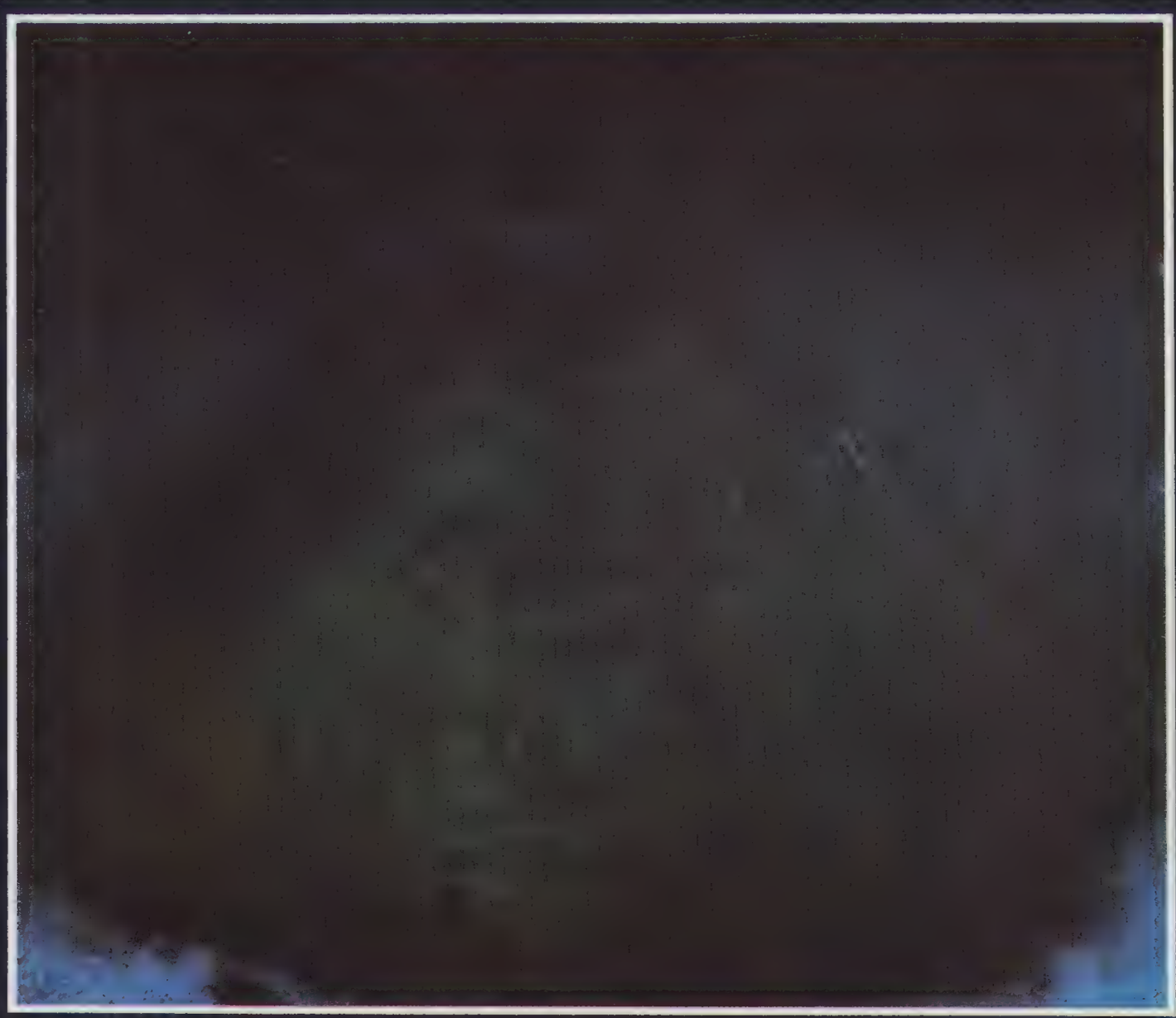

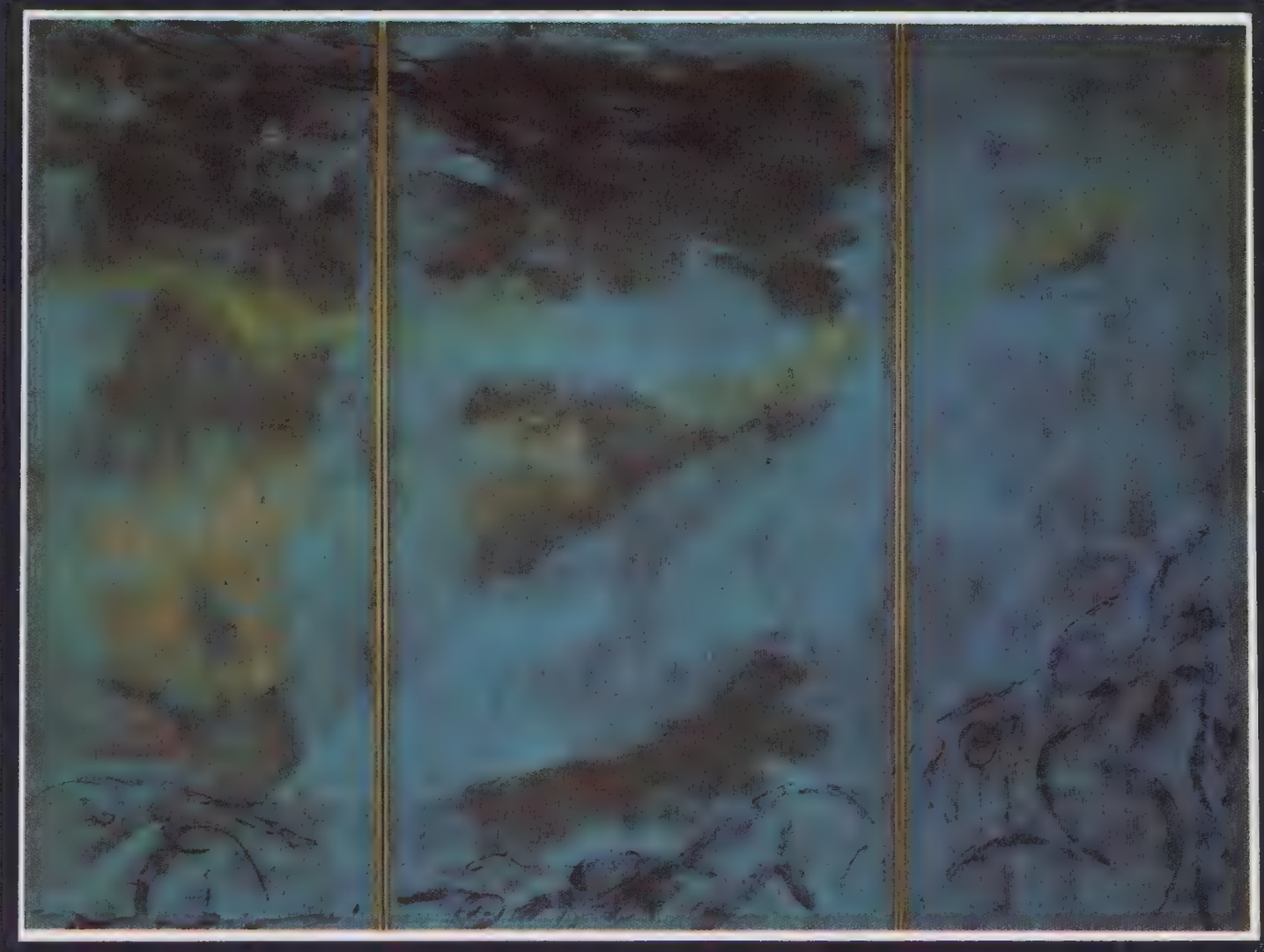

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Paul Klee, The Village Master, c. 1937
Oil on wrapping paper, 17¾ x 11⅞ inches

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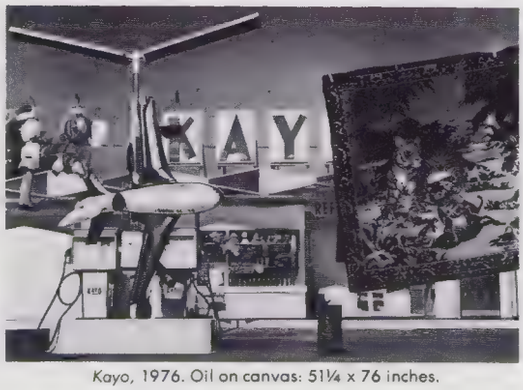

Kayo, 1976. Oil on canvas: 51¼ x 76 inches.

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Untitled. 66 x 79", Oil on canvas. 1977.

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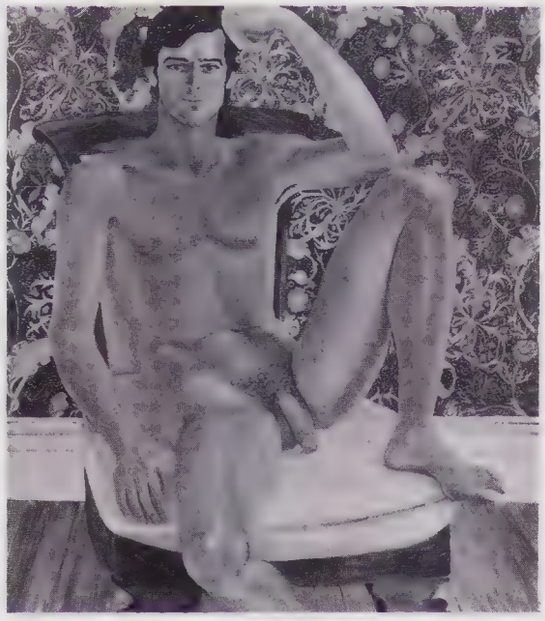

Walter Finley Seated Nude, 1976. o/c 56 x 52".

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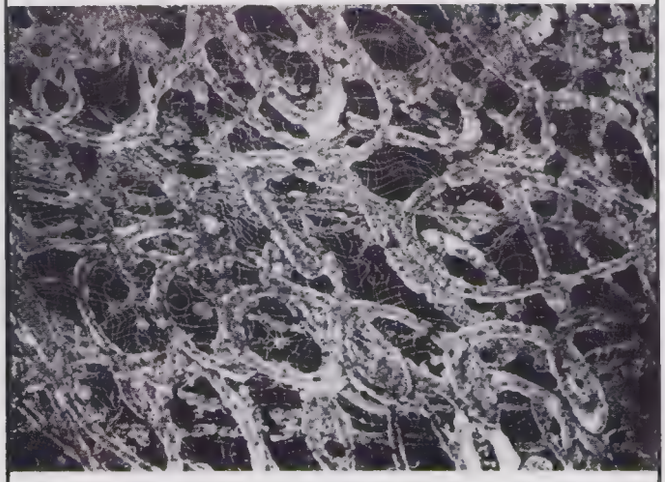

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September 17–October 6

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SEPTEMBER 24–OCTOBER 13

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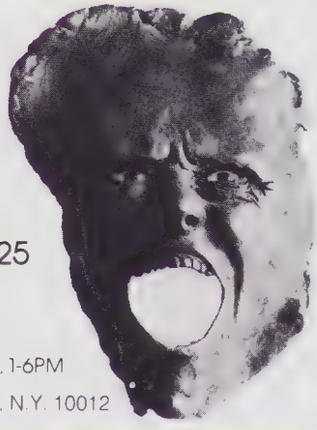
mauritz rofhok

face masks
september 6–25



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Edward Kimball

September 17–October 6

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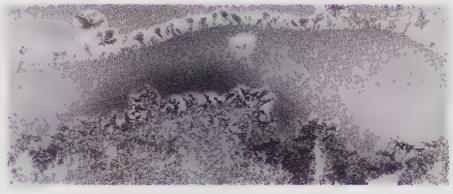

leon c. yost

crystal landscapes september 6–25

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margie billstein katz

recent works

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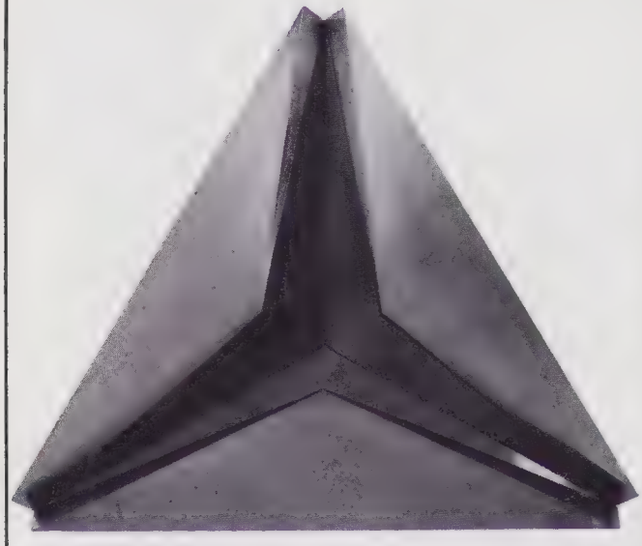

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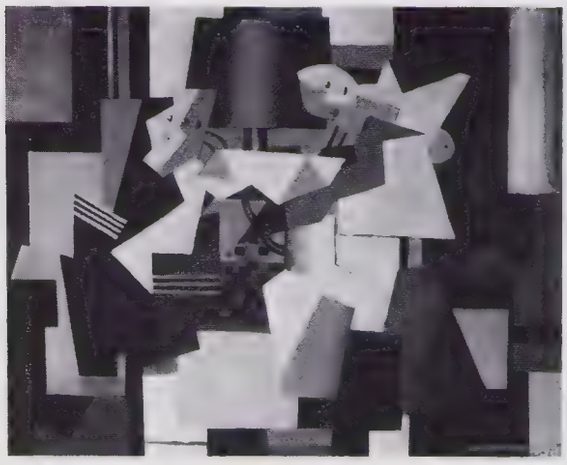

Abstraction Yellow, 1947. Oil on canvas, 36x36 in.

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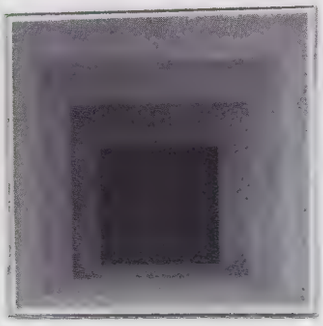

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PAUL KLEE'S "AD PARNASSUM": THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POLYPHONY AS MODELS FOR KLEE'S ART

ANDREW KAGAN

An absolute painting with both independent formal life and rich associative possibilities, "Ad Parnassum" is a comprehensive work, the only comprehensive work of Klee's career.

for D.L.

What had been accomplished in music by the end of the eighteenth century has only begun in the fine arts. Mathematics and physics have given us a clue in the form of rules to be strictly observed or departed from, as the case may be.

"Exact Experiments in the Field of Art,"
—Paul Klee, 1928[1]

What specifically did Klee regard as the great accomplishments of eighteenth-century music? And in what sense did he feel that his own artistic experiments—theoretical, pedagogical, and practical—were related to those accomplishments? Klee's writings often suggest that within the history of eighteenth-century music there lies a key—a key to the problem of apprehending his ambitions and the principal directions of his career. We know of his extensive musical background, of his love for eighteenth-century music, and especially of his reverence for Mozart, whom he regarded as the greatest creative artist of all time.[2] But this information concerns culminations, not beginnings. We have never known to what specific musical groundworks Klee compared what he had "only begun in the fine arts." It has long been observed that Klee felt "Bach and Mozart could probably help him to formulate certain fundamental principles governing painting, whose lack Goethe had felt—principles around which everything else would fall into place."[3] But what sort of principles? And more important, to what end? In *practical* terms, exactly what was it that Klee had in mind for the ultimate development of the pictorial arts; what did he hope to contribute; and how did eighteenth-century music fit in as a primary source?

In *Ad Parnassum* (1932, Fig. 1), his largest work prior to 1937, the most ambitious and important painting of his career, Klee alluded to a landmark eighteenth-century treatise on music theory, the *Gradus ad Parnassum* of Johann Josef Fux.[4] That allusion, previously unremarked, proves to be decisive, both for our understanding of *Ad Parnassum* and for our efforts to determine Klee's central objectives. For the *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725), essentially an introduction to the principles of counterpoint (polyphonic composition), lies at the very roots of "what had been accomplished in music by the end of the eighteenth century."

Fux's historic achievement consists basically in his creation of:

> a codification of the study of counterpoint, the establishment of a teaching method for which theorists had long groped, and by which the didactic process was unequivocally subjected to historical perspective. . .
>
> Published in 1725 at Imperial expense and distributed within a short time throughout the entire musical world, Fux's treatise marked a turning point in the evolution of music theory.[5]

But Fux's greatest triumph lies in the profound influence of the *Gradus ad Parnassum* upon the composers of the Viennese Classical School. Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven all learned the fundamental techniques of contrapuntal composition from Fux's treatise.[6] It has justifiably been claimed that "by safeguarding the polyphonic tradition in an age when its appreciation was fast waning, (Fux) laid the foundation for a classical Viennese style."[7]

Though Klee's writings, to my knowledge, nowhere cite Fux's name, there can be no question of Klee's familiarity with the *Gradus ad Parnassum.* Klee was an accomplished musician, a perceptive music critic, and an amateur musicologist thoroughly conversant with the history of music and music theory in the eighteenth century.[8] He could not have been unaware of Fux's contribution, because the importance of that contribution has been continually and emphatically acknowledged by composers from Fux's time to the present. Paul Hindemith, who was personally acquainted with Klee,[9] even suggested that Fux's work was the basis for all subsequent approaches to the teaching of counterpoint, and that, were it not for the achievements of Fux, "the art of composition might actually have fallen into decline."[10]

Because the teaching of counterpoint has depended so heavily on Fux's fundamental work, there exists between Klee and Fux a practical relationship that is unique in the history of interactions between painting and music. From 1920 to 1933, Klee was himself a teacher of counterpoint and polyphony, as applied to visual art.[11] This long-known fact acquires new significance in light of our new information about *Ad Parnassum.* Indeed, Klee's allusion to Fux in his most ambitious painting demands that we examine the role of counterpoint and polyphony in Klee's art, theory, and teaching. We cannot fully understand Klee's purposes in *Ad Parnassum* until we understand how counterpoint and Fux's approach to it helped Klee to organize his own approaches to teaching and theory. Most important, we cannot understand the place of *Ad Parnassum* in Klee's central ambitions until we understand just how eighteenth-century polyphony became Klee's foremost guide in his thirty-year struggle to rise from a draftsman and caricaturist to one of history's very greatest masters of the art of color painting.

The expression "Ad Parnassum," both in Fux's treatise and in Klee's painting, implies the ascent from basic fundamentals to the pinnacles of art. Let us begin at fundamentals and try to grasp the complex relationship with eighteenth-century polyphony that influenced the gamut of Klee's endeavors, from his day-to-day teaching, to his theoretical writings, to his greatest artistic achievements.

The Principles of Counterpoint Applied

When Klee received his appointment as a Bauhaus Master in 1920, he was confronted with the problem of organizing an approach to teaching—"to make explicit what had been largely unconscious." It is logical that the musician Klee should have turned for aid to the pedagogical traditions of music, so much better established than those of painting. It should be noted that the term "counterpoint"—meaning fundamental structural disciplines in art—was very much in the air at the Bauhaus in the early Twenties, and in the Munich and Berlin art scenes as well. It appears in the discussions of Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus director, and of Klee's fellow Masters Oskar Schlemmer and Johannes Itten.[12] It would be impossible to determine how much Klee stimulated this usage or how much he was stimulated by it. It is in any case certain that the favorable attitudes of his new colleagues must have encouraged his natural inclination to think in musical terms. The application of contrapuntal concepts at which he arrived was, unlike those of the others, pictorial rather than verbal, very precise rather than metaphorical.

We know that Klee found counterpoint valuable as a conceptual tool, both in the development of his teaching program and in the formulation of his art theories. In several of his Bauhaus lectures he employed contrapuntal-pictorial devices to help communicate certain theoretical ideas to his students. An outstanding example of that practice is his translation into graphic terms of a passage from a Bach sonata (Fig. 2).[13] Klee used this remarkable diagram to illustrate the possibility of quantifying pictorial rhythms and linear dynamics. Similarly, in his classroom discussions of line he presented examples of what he called "drawings in two voices," i.e., linear counterpoint (Figs. 3 and 4).[14] Once again we find an attempt at quantification, here in the structuring of linear relationships. By strongly equating the genesis of line with the genesis of melody, Klee found a solution to the problem of relating one line to another; namely, the principles of counterpoint.

Klee also had recourse to counterpoint in his theories and lectures on color. In accord with his favorite maxim—"from the static to the dynamic"[15]—he desired to conceptualize and demonstrate the continuity of spectral color and the movement inherent in color interaction. That desire was motivated by personal preference as well as by theoretical ideals. As we may judge from his paintings, Klee before 1933 saw relatively few possibilities in localized, discrete, disjunct handling of color. He was far more interested in the dynamics of color harmony and tonal organization. He liked to make colors interact by glazing—by layering washes of transparent color—and he liked to make them blend together by tightly controlling gradations of value and chroma. He therefore sought an illustrative device to supplement existing paradigms, such as the color wheel and sphere, which tend to give a discrete, static picture of color relationships. So he borrowed from music a dynamic conception of form, the canon (strict imitative counterpoint). Again translating the musical concept into visual terms, he arrived at a new paradigm of color relationships which he called "The Canon of Color Totality" (Figs. 5 and 6).

The "Canon" diagrams represent Klee's only truly original contribution to color theory. In them he created a canonic structure or pattern by continually reintroducing the "crescendo-decrescendo" color "subjects" in different "voices." Thus he found a means to demonstrate—with a discrete, diagrammatic notation—the continually increasing or decreasing participation of each primary color in the formation of the spectral progression. He described this "canonic" color relationship to his students as a "kind of three-part counterpoint."[16]

The foregoing examples of pictorial counterpoint illustrate Klee's desire, above all, to create *rational* solutions to pictorial problems—solutions which were intelligible and teachable because they were subject to quantification. Hence he spoke of "practical attempts at measurement" when he presented to his students his "notation of a musical canon" (Fig. 6). In counterpoint and related musical concepts Klee heard an answer to a major artistic dilemma of the twentieth century; that is, when line and color are liberated from their traditional tasks of description, how can their use be systematized for purposes of instruction?

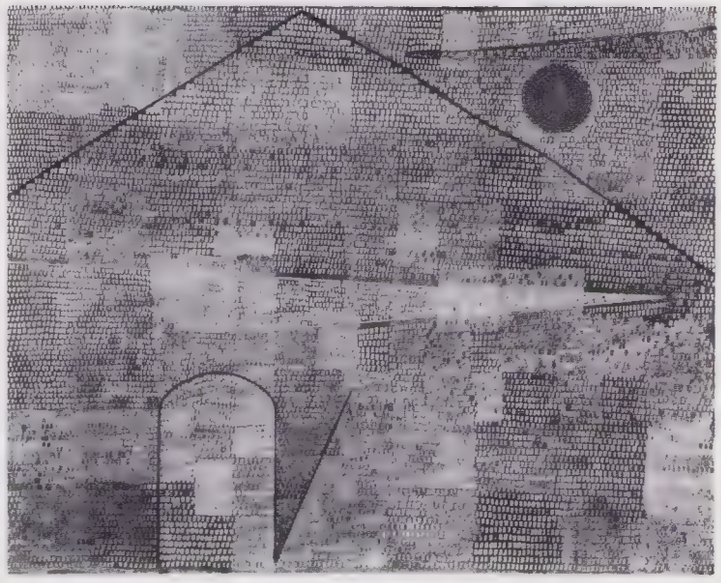


Fig. 1. Paul Klee, Ad Parnassum, 1932. *Oil and casein on canvas, 39-3/8 x 49-5/8". Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

Klee had little use for the venerable practice of exploiting music as a fund of metaphors for the "ineffable" in painting. On the contrary, he sought to introduce to art theory and instruction a particular type of discipline and precision which he found in music theory and instruction, especially that established in the eighteenth century. To that end he borrowed not only from the outward, formal manifestations of contrapuntal practice. Far more significant was his direct recourse to the theoretical foundations of that practice, to the brilliant pedagogical methodology conceived by Fux.

An examination of the *Gradus ad Parnassum* reveals an approach to pedagogical problems and a conceptual framework strikingly close to those which Klee advocated and employed in his own teaching. Fux's treatise begins with a section devoted to the mathematical bases of music theory and the principles governing the derivation of intervals from arithmetic and harmonic progressions. Thus from the outset Fux stressed the scientific foundations of music theory in mathematics and acoustical physics. We know too that Klee accorded primacy to the study of mathematics and physics. The lectures and exercises which he presented to his students frequently dealt with problems in analytical geometry, spherical trigonometry, mechanics, statics, dynamics, and related disciplines. For Klee wanted to establish scientific, rational foundations for instruction in the pictorial arts, such as existed in music. He sought, in fact, to create a true science of picture-making—a pictorial science to help define the beginnings of art as acoustic science helps to define the beginnings of music, and to elevate painting about the level of what is purely subjective, purely personal. That is why so many of Klee's pictures must be understood primarily as experiments in basic pictorial problems—motion, gravity, direction, energy, thrust and counterthrust and even psychodynamics.[17] And that is why arrows, as kinetic and emotional vectors, play such a significant

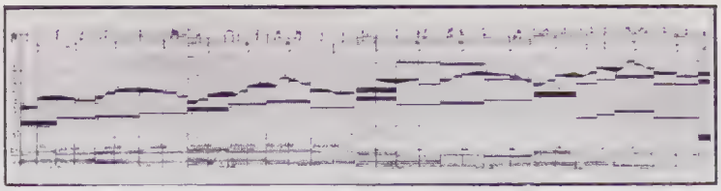


Fig. 2. Graphic Translation of Three-Part Passage from J.S. Bach. From Klee's Bauhaus Course Notes, 1921-22.

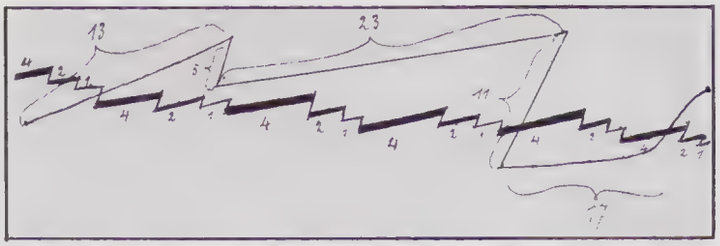


Fig. 3. Paul Klee, Drawing in Two Voices, from Bauhaus Course Notes, 1921-22.

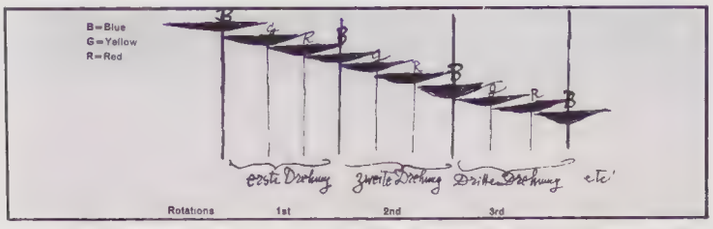


Fig. 6. Paul Klee, The Canon of Color Totality Unrolled, from Bauhaus Course Notes, 1921-22.

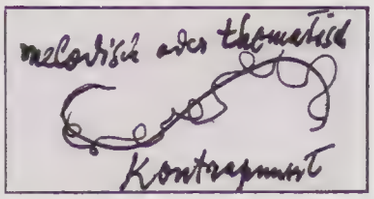


Fig. 4. Paul Klee, Drawing in Two Voices, from Bauhaus Course Notes, 1921-22.

role in his art. From basic experiments Klee hoped to arrive at fundamental laws. For like Fux, he firmly believed that all creation, including the genesis of form in art, must proceed from such fundamental laws, the "rules to be strictly observed or departed from."[18]

In his foreword to the *Gradus ad Parnassum,* Fux set forth his motivations for writing the work:

> . . .There have certainly been many authors famous for their teaching and competence, who have left an abundance of works on the theory of music; but on the practice of writing music they have said very little, and this little is not easily understood. Generally, they have been content to give a few examples, and never have they felt the need of inventing a simple method by which the novice can progress gradually in this art.
>
> My object is to help young persons who want to learn . . . Seeking a solution to this problem, I began, therefore, many years ago, to work out a method similar to that by which children learn first letters, then syllables, and finally how to read and write.[19]

It is clear the Fux tried in his teaching to emphasize the concepts underlying creation, rather than to transmit his personal style of composition. Klee was similarly unconcerned with propagating a school based upon his own style. He desired, above all, to inculcate in his students principles which he believed were fundamental to all creative processes. He repeatedly emphasized the need to "concern ourselves first with the function and not with the finished form" and to understand "how the picture is actually constructed."[20]

Like Fux, Klee had an abiding interest in learning processes in the young. He carefully studied childrens' art and intellectual development and he even catalogued the childhood works of his son Felix.[21] He regarded childrens' art as a kind of "pure" creation, which afforded special insight into the fundamental nature of visual and symbolic thinking. He felt that such art could offer important clues as to what is truly essential and universal in the process of image making, and that it could therefore aid greatly in the striving for economy of artistic means.

It was precisely that interest in the learning process and a desire for a "simple method by which the novice can progress gradually" which led Klee to impute so much value to the architectural and, by extension, to the "architectonic" in music, painting, and other media. In 1903, he set forth in his diary a view which he was never to abandon:

> Because all the interrelations between their individual design elements are obviously calculable, works of architecture provide faster training for the stupid novice than pictures of "nature." And once one has grasped the idea of measurability in connection with design, the study of nature will progress with greater ease and accuracy.[22]

It is equally logical that Klee's interest in the learning process and desire for a "simple method" also led him to model his main pedagogical objectives directly upon those of Fux.

To be sure, Klee's approach to teaching and theory has many sources—Leonardo, Goethe, Runge, Feurbach, to mention only a few. But for several reasons it was Fux who provided the ideal model for the conceptual framework of Klee's teaching. First of all, Klee had been a gifted musician since childhood; by the age of eleven he was sufficiently accomplished to have been named a supernumerary member of the Bern symphony orchestra. He therefore had a certain understanding and appreciation of the principles of eighteenth-century counterpoint, long before he knew or could comprehend traditional art theories. The gifted child musician has an access to Classical music that the child artist cannot have to Classical painting. From personal experience, as well as from knowledge of music history, Klee had every reason to believe in the accessibility and effectiveness of Fux's approach to teaching and theory. This is an important point, because after Klee became a participant in the Bauhaus vision, he grew to be as committed as Fux had been to the "establishment of a teaching method for which theorists had long groped."

Furthermore, Fux's methodology had indisputably proved its worth by retaining its essential validity for over two centuries. Then too, one aspect of that methodology was a judicious eclecticism that must have greatly appealed to Klee, as inspiration or justification for his own eclectic tendencies.[23] Both men believed that the laying of foundations was more a matter of consolidation than of revolution. It is also likely that Fux's flair for wit and irony met with Klee's approval. In any case, the example of Fux seems to have suggested to Klee that if ultimate things are to be attained in art, someone must begin at the beginning. Someone must lay the foundations and construct the stairway. So Klee undertook his herculean efforts to make "contributions to fundamental principles and the theory of pictorial form."

We must stress that the objectives which led Klee to work out more than 2000 pages of theoretical writings and investigations were not merely pedagogical. Far from it. Klee was first and foremost a painter; he was a theorist only in the second place, and a teacher only in the third. In the final analysis, what led Klee to follow Fux's efforts was the fact that *Fux's theories and teaching methods had implemented the perfected state that Klee ascribed to late eighteenth-century music.* Indeed, the aesthetic ideal that found its ultimate realization in the music of Mozart is the main ideal promoted in Fux's teaching; it is implicit in the title *Gradus ad Parnassum,* literally "Stairway to Parnassus."[24] In Fux's thinking, tectonic principles were a necessary beginning, not an end in themselves. Once the student had assimilated the laws of counterpoint as postulated in the *Gradus ad Parnassum,* those laws were supposed to direct him toward the more sublime realms of music, where structure and expression meet. In this, Fux succeeded beyond the possibility of his dreams; for the very essence of Mozart's perfection is his masterful amalgamation of structure and expression, of the tectonic and the lyrical. Fux had constructed a stairway climbed by a later generation of composers to a realm where music was at once pure structure and pure lyricism, where it simultaneously possessed both perfection of form and depth of absolute content. To build such a stairway for his own art was precisely one of Klee's foremost ambitions.

We know that Klee longed to contribute to perfecting the pictorial arts. That hope had motivated his decision, as a young man, to pursue a career in painting rather than in music; for he

saw an opportunity to strive in visual art toward the kind of grand synthesis that had already been achieved in the art of sounds.[25]

At the outset of his career (1902) he declared:

> Now my immediate and at the same time highest goal will be to bring architectonic and poetic painting into a fusion, or at least to establish a harmony between them.[26]

Like Fux, Klee felt that instruction must begin with the law and the tectonic principle, and that it must, at the same time, emphasize the provisional nature of law and principle[27]—that it must always uphold the teutonic-lyric synthesis as the true goal and ideal. In the sublime polyphony of Mozart, founded on teachings of Fux, Klee found a natural model on which to formulate his own objectives, both artistic and theoretical. The accomplishments of late eighteenth-century music led him to the vision of an ultimate, ideal realm of art, the realm to which he gave the name "Higher Polyphony" *(Hohere Polyphonie).*[28]

Toward a Theory of Pictorial Polyphony

Klee's goal of "higher polyphony" meant primarily the goal of a rationally based, absolute content. His appreciation of the tectonic-lyrical synthesis in late eighteenth-century polyphony was mainly an appreciation of the way in which absolute content was forged through the architectural organization of multiple, independent themes or melodies. We must try to grasp Klee's understanding of that process if we wish to understand his purposes. For Klee believed that art without accessible content was not art at all, and that art without universal, absolute content could never be great art.[29]

Melody and theme can be used as vehicles for poetic content—description, expression, symbolism—ideas closely bound up with specific human experience and emotion. And in the unfolding of melody in time there is implicit our mortality and our limitations. Klee felt that these human elements could not be wholly sacrificed in art; that they must be embraced, but that they must also be overcome. That is exactly what late eighteenth-century polyphony had, in Klee's view, accomplished to perfection. The melodies used by Mozart, Haydn, and the early Beethoven are often delicately charming, deeply moving, wryly humorous, or even richly associative. But beautiful, suggestive melody in itself makes only pleasing or popular music, not great music: the human element becomes the limiting factor. The solution was to organize multiple, independent, two-dimensional (intervals of pitch and time) thematic structures into a three-dimensional polyphonic texture; through this technique the late eighteenth-century masters—above all Mozart—were able to make simultaneous harmonic relationships between the thematic elements dominate the sequential harmonic relationships within the elements themselves. So, as Klee said, the temporal element was partially overcome.[30] The layering of several independent themes mitigated the personal quality of any individual theme, and in some fundamental way, the various poetic contents of those themes were transubstantiated into the absolute content of the whole. This is how Mozart was able to indulge his desire and extraordinary ability to create emotive themes, without actually wallowing in the mundane, the personal, or the programmatic.

This, then, is the artistic problem solved so frequently by Mozart, and somewhat less frequently by Beethoven and Haydn: how to create an art with vital content related in a general way to human experience, but not limited by association with *specific* human experience; how to make art that is broadly accessible without being referential; how to forge, out of diverse, relatively mundane elements, a sublime unity rich in feeling, but free of mere charm, mere description, or mere pathos.

It was precisely in that dynamic harmonization of diverse thematic elements that Klee felt late eighteenth-century polyphony had captured the universal creative principle. For he viewed every higher organism in nature as the dynamic synthesis of many independent functions.[31] And he believed that in the living work of art, as in every living organism, the whole must be greater than the sum of its parts. By "safeguarding the polyphonic tradition" Fux had in some sense made possible that Mozartian realm of "higher polyphony," which gave us, in

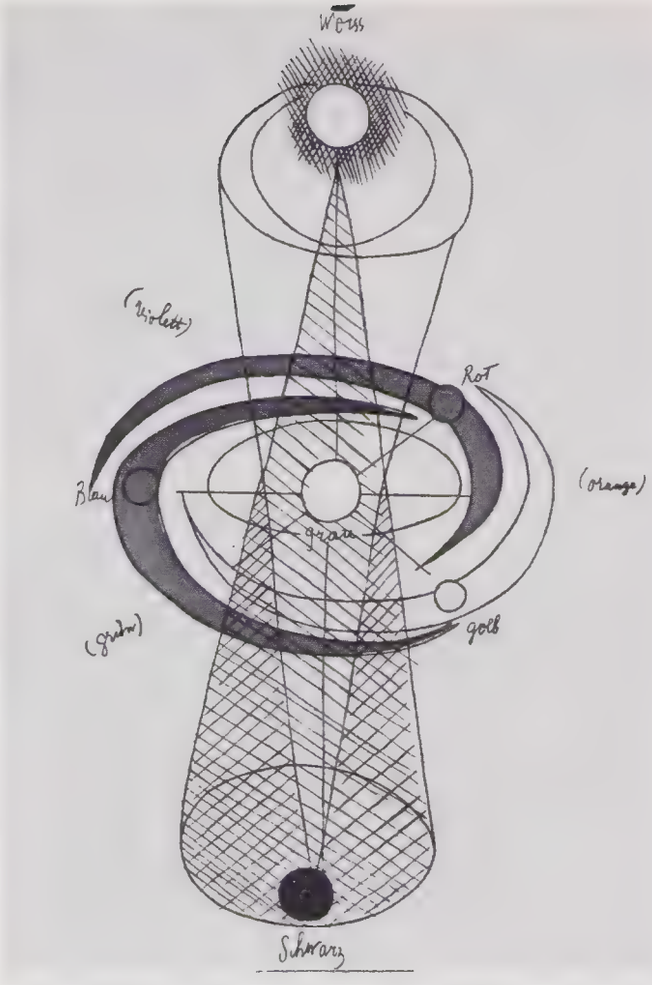


Fig. 5. Paul Klee, The Canon of Color Totality, from Bauhaus Course Notes, 1921-22.

Klee's view, our only concrete examples of a truly comprehensive art.

Clearly, Klee's concept "higher polyphony" represents an almost utopian vision of an ultimate synthesis in the pictorial arts.[32] But as the designation for a pictorial style or styles, the term 'polyphony' had for Klee a more immediate, more practical, and at least equally crucial significance. For he felt that the development of an actual polyphonic practice might be the route to "higher polyphony" in painting.

Klee defined polyphony as the "simultaneity of several independent themes," or, with a more pedagogical emphasis, as "the teaching of harmony"—i.e., how to make independent themes interact successfully.[33] On the potential role of that concept in pictorial art, he offered the following important, if somewhat cryptic pronouncement:

> There is polyphony in music. In itself the attempt to transpose it into art would offer no special interest. But to gather insights into music through the special character of polyphonic works, to penetrate deep into this cosmic sphere, to issue forth a transformed beholder of art, and then to lurk in waiting for these things in the picture, that is something more. For the simultaneity of several independent themes is something that is possible not only in music; typical things in general do not belong just in one place, but have their roots and organic anchor everywhere and anywhere.[34]

The Contribution of Delaunay

It should not be supposed that Klee's ideas about polyphony grew out of a purely internal dialogue between him and eighteenth-century music. On the contrary, it is likely that his theories would never have developed at all were it not for his fateful encounters with the theories and paintings of Robert Delaunay. Paradoxically, it was this precocious French painter who first opened the door between Klee's struggles to master

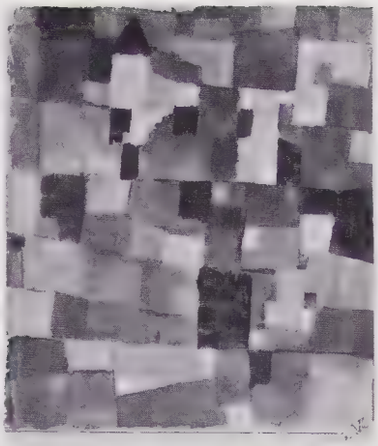


Fig. 7. Paul Klee, Space Architecture, 1915. *Watercolor. Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

Fig. 8. Paul Klee, The Niesen, 1915. *Watercolor on paper, on cardboard, 7 x 10¼". Courtesy Rupf Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

painting and his understanding of Classical Viennese polyphony.[35]

Klee first saw Delaunay's work at the Munich *Blaue Reiter* Exhibition late in 1911.[36] He was sufficiently impressed to arrange a visit to Delaunay's Paris studio in April, 1912. There he saw the new "Simultaneous Window" paintings, which he immediately recognized as the most advanced painting being done at that time. In August of that year Klee published a review of the Zurich *Moderne Bünd* exhibition, in which he called Delaunay "one of the most brilliant individuals of our age." He must have heard or read some of the shop talk of Delaunay's Orphist circle, which often dwelt on "fugal" and musical construction, for in the same review he likened the "Simultaneous Windows" to the fugues of J.S. Bach.[37] The direction of Klee's thinking about painting was beginning to merge with the direction of his thinking about music. Then, at the beginning of 1913, Klee published in *Der Sturm* his translation of a manuscript essay Delaunay had sent him—a crucial manifesto entitled "Sûr la Lumière."[38]

It has frequently been observed that Delaunay had a direct influence on a considerable number of Klee's works through 1921—works which bear the unmistakable stamp of various Delaunay styles.[39] It has not been sufficiently noted that Delaunay's most profound, far-reaching influence on the slow-maturing Klee came through his theories. In "Sûr la Lumière" Delaunay proposed that *depth* is the fundamental feature of visual reality, that the essence of visual depth is the "rhythmic simultaneity" of light, and that the "simultaneity of light consists in the harmony and rhythm of the colors that create vision." These arguments lead to the conclusion that painting, in order to attain the "sublimity of nature," should renounce the representation of objects and light relationships between objects, and that it should embrace as its only proper subject the simultaneous relationships of colors in depth. In a letter to Klee's friend Kandinsky, Delaunay spoke of discovering *"laws (of painting), based on the transparency of color, which is comparable to musical tones."*[40] Elsewhere he wrote:

> I have dared to create an architecture out of color, in the hope . . . of attaining the condition of a dynamic poetry, and finally, thereby, to purify the painterly means of all literature, of all descriptive anecdotes.[41]

All of this had a personal significance for Klee even greater than the impact it had on his friends Franz Marc and August Macke, who simply became German Orphists. For Klee it was more like a vision of the Promised Land than a revolution of style. In the transparent depths of Delaunay's *peinture pure* he witnessed the incipient realization of the very ideas he had been pondering and struggling with for years.[42] The tectonic-lyrical synthesis was the ideal which had motivated Klee's entry into painting and his struggles to achieve greatness. Here was Delaunay, making successful, influential pictures and talking about a dynamic synthesis of architecture and poetry based upon fundamental laws comparable to those of music. Delaunay had even reworked the then-current art term 'simultaneity' from a form almost useless to Klee into a form totally germane to his thinking. As applied by and to the Cubists, 'simultaneity' referred to the presentation, all at once, of many different sides and views of a solid object. This is fundamentally a sculptural concept—pertaining to solids and volumes—and as such was fundamentally alien to Klee. He was a pure painter and graphic artist who "never felt particularly at home with sculpture"; he "wanted to be a colorist first and foremost."[43] Delaunay's "simultaneity" pertained to *visual perception* of color schemes as they interpenetrate in Nature, as in atmospheric color. From there it was not so great a distance to the idea of the simultaneity of independent color themes, analogous to the simultaneity of independent themes in musical polyphony.

Delaunay, like Klee and unlike the Cubists, was most taken by the optical, Impressionist, colorist side of Cézanne's painting. Cubist art, with its chiseled stone appearance and terra-cotta monochromy, referred primarily to the faceted, gem-cut concept of Cézanne's picture surfaces. Thus it was above all Delaunay who suggested to Klee how the ideas of Cézanne—Klee's "teacher *par excellence*"—could be applied to the creation of pure, absolute painting. Here too, in the problem of absolute painting, it was Delaunay who demonstrated that musical thinking could be of genuine value. For he offered no fatuous analogies, no specious efforts at "musical painting." To Klee "musical painting" was a totally hollow notion, without meaning. Again he sought to create absolute painting, not musical painting, and Delaunay reassured him that absolute music could be a fundamental aid in creating original visual experiences not derived from Nature.

Finally, Delaunay proposed a connection between pictorial architecture, simultaneity, musical laws, contrapuntal structures, and *transparent color.* By his very nature, Klee was as disposed to think in terms of transparent color in painting as he was to think in terms of eighteenth-century polyphony when it came to music. His most characteristic painting techniques—glazing with transparent washes, spraying, misting with a loaded brush, and oil-transfer drawing on transparent color stains—have their roots in his earliest efforts as a painter, long before his encounter with Delaunay.[44] In short, Delaunay offered Klee a satisfying rationale, pointing up basic, valid connections between Klee's native taste and his intellectual and professional ideals. This of course did nothing to diminish Klee's sympathy for the aims of Delaunay, at least the pure painter Delaunay of 1911-1913.

The question of putative relationships between painting and music was proposed and rehashed continually by critics and painters from Baudelaire to the 1930s. Naturally these discussions did not escape Klee's attention, but the usual metaphors and rhetoric did not satisfy him. In 1905 he lamented that "no analysis is successful" in the question of parallels between music and graphic art.[45] It was thanks largely to Delaunay that, by 1917, Klee had gained enough confidence and clarity of vision to declare that:

> Polyphonic painting is superior to music in that, here, the time element becomes a spatial element. The notion of simultaneity stands out even more richly.[46]

This statement should be taken with caution: it is only an hypothesis. Klee was still years away from designing any kind of effective, meaningful polyphonic pictorial structures. And at no time did he believe that he or any colleague or predecessor

had ever attained the pinnacle of Higher Polyphony in painting. Moreover, when Klee much later remarked that "perhaps it had been his good fortune to develop painting, at least on the formal plane, to the stage reached in music by Mozart," he meant on the formal plane only.[47] Still, the 1917 statement represents a healthy new optimism in the thinking of the former skeptic, cynic and satirist, a positive optimism that carried him forward to his greatest achievements. The work of Delaunay had inspired him to the conclusion that such a thing as Higher Polyphony was actually possible in painting.

Unfortunately, Delaunay's 1911-13 efforts represent the very peak of his career. Unlike Klee, Delaunay matured quickly and burned out quickly. By 1917, Klee was on his own in trying to figure out exactly what "the simultaneity of independent themes" was going to mean for the art of painting.

The Development of the Color Theme

Klee's first problem was to determine just what an independent color theme might be, that is, what in painting could be precisely analogous to a musical sequence of neutral, roughly equivalent compositional units which conveys a thematic identity and content? First, he had to figure out what in the structure of color painting could be comparable to the musical note, a basic building block which itself has no very special meaning.[48] Next, he had to decide how to arrange such building blocks into forms whose coherence, continuity, and identity are self-evident and, finally, expressive. This is somewhat akin to the problem confronted by the beginning musical student trying to play a theme or melody so that it sounds like something more than a succession of notes, and so that its identity and expressive content come forth.

Formerly, selecting a pictorial theme had meant choosing a mythical, biblical, nature or battle scene, still life or model, to depict in a photographic, poetic, or abstract manner. Now Klee was trying to define a completely new sort of enterprise—how to order color units into a pattern with a significant, evocative identity, an identity that raised it above mere decoration, mere intellectual interest, and mere sensory stimulation.

In his effort to develop absolute color themes as vehicles for expressive content, Klee had a convenient source in his own early experiments. In 1908 he had spoken of:

> laying down complexes of color patches, freely produced from my feeling, as the ineradicable, essential core of the work.[49]

Obviously it is a long way from this primitive sort of color expression to an ordered system of composition. Klee traveled this road very slowly and deliberately. Along the way, he drew upon a staggering multiplicity of sources in his education, his experience, and his artistic milieu. Very few practical details regarding the construction of color themes came to him suddenly, as if by revelation. It is therefore impossible to trace the exact chronological evolution of this complex nexus of ideas in Klee's mind. The following discussion is an attempt to condense the crux of his thinking on the subject over a period of many years.

From about 1907-08 on, Klee's musical background, familiarity with Goethe, and encounters with Neo-Impressionism, Van Gogh, Cézanne, and contemporary art theory were gradually persuading him that some kind of absolute compositional structure and experimental approach were necessary to "harness" expressive color. It was beginning vaguely to occur to him that the freedom, absoluteness, and special expressiveness of music, for which painters, critics and theorists yearned, depended not upon intuition or anarchy, but rather upon well defined structural formats and systems of articulation at every level, and upon the "rules to be strictly observed or departed from." For Klee, it would not be enough even to be a great or powerfully expressive colorist: There had to be an architecture, a system, and a language to temper and universalize color expression into the "cool Romanticism" he found in the music of Mozart—the style that is neither melodramatic nor frigidly intellectual. But again, little of consequence happened until Klee met Delaunay, who catalyzed in his mind a reaction between these diverse sources and ideas.

Delaunay, like Klee, loved the expressive power of color.[50] Like Klee also, he wanted to work with the entire spectrum, and with the harmonies and tonalities of Nature; and that demanded

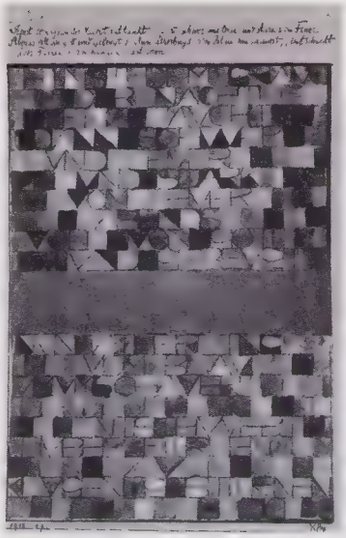


Fig. 9. Paul Klee, Once Emerged from the Gray of Night, 1918. *Watercolor on paper, on cardboard, 8¾ x 6". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

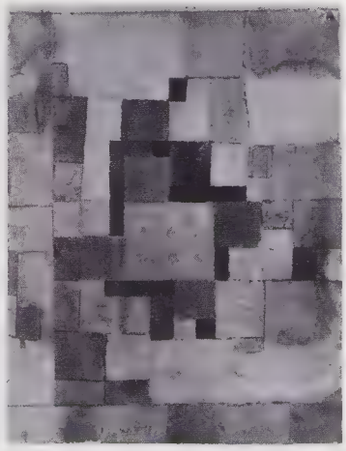


Fig. 10. Paul Klee, With the Green Rectangle, 1919. *Watercolor on paper. Courtesy Felix Klee Collection.*

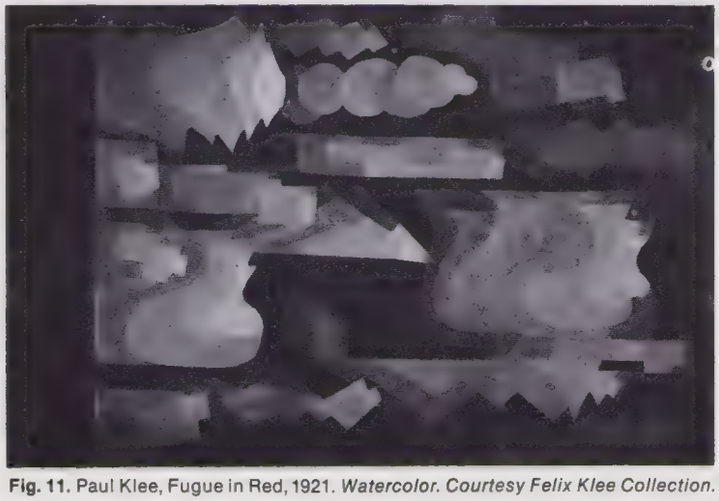


Fig. 11. Paul Klee, Fugue in Red, 1921. *Watercolor. Courtesy Felix Klee Collection.*

the use of color dissonance in order to create active, vital harmonies, as opposed to the inert harmonies of traditional tonal painting based on a palette of low intensity.[51] Delaunay had developed an expressionist color sensibility by cultivating dissonance during his Fauve period. Chastened by Neo-Impressionism, Cézanne, and Cubism, he then sought a means to control color and dissonance so he could indulge that sensibility without turning out lurid, meretricious, anarchic painting. The *Simultaneous Window* paintings represent, in effect, his effort at rationalization and control. When we compare their cool, rich judiciously modulated color to the extravagant "free" color of his earlier works (e.g., his *Self Portrait* of 1909),[52] we can see how well he succeeded and how impressive that must have been to Klee. No less impressive to Klee was the fact that transparency was an integral part of Delaunay's means of color control; for multiple overlays of transparent color automatically tend to compress the range of hue, value and chroma, making it easier to avoid blaring dissonances, even with an unlimited palette.

The old notion that color had to be the irrational element in painting did not sit well with Delaunay, as it had not sat well with Seurat and Goethe. Klee concurred. In his Tunisian watercolors of 1914—a crucial watershed in his career—Klee, like his friend and traveling companion Macke, began to abstract Nature into structures closely derived from Delaunay's *Windows.*[53] "The synthesis of urban architecture and pictorial architecture" Klee called it.[54] In these pictures, his first consistent successes with color painting, he used a grid to order the simultaneous presentation of several different interpenetrating space layers. As in Delaunay's *Windows,* the different space layers are broken up into partial geometric forms and facets. But Klee soon enough began to sense that something was wrong with this approach. It is really not very logical or rational at all, in spite of Delaunay's sensible theories and noble rhetoric. Let us see why.

Fig. 12. Paul Klee, Alter Klang, 1925. *Oil on cardboard, 15 x 15". Courtesy R. Doetsch-Benzinger Bequest, Kunstmuseum, Basel.*

I have spoken of Klee's love for transparent color, and I have implied his commitment to pictorial depth, as a necessary feature of Higher Polyphony. Delaunay used transparent color to create pictorial depth, but there is no real, stable structure to that depth. It is a jumble of fragments and facets, almost like a box of broken pieces of colored glass. Unlike eighteenth-century polyphonic music, it cannot be analyzed into separate component layers. In that music Klee so revered, each voice or independent theme constitutes a layer of the auditory depth, and each such layer can be isolated and examined independently. In Delaunay's *Windows*, where the whole space is so thoroughly intermixed, there is no possibility for independent themes to exist. Though transparent color depth was Delaunay's means of control, he had no means of controlling transparent color depth. To view this another way, Delaunay's concern for a "dynamic poetry" of color had led him toward dynamic, unstable formats; Klee's intensive and rigorous grounding in musical thought was gradually leading him toward very stable, static compositional structures, in which the individual composition would provide the necessary dynamism. As he associated the depth of polyphony with the three dimensions of pictorial depth, so he now began to associate the independent theme with single layers of that depth. As a musical melody consists of two dimensions (pitch and time), so his color themes would consist of the flat two dimensions of the picture plane.

Klee's 1915 progress toward this definition of the color theme format may have been as much intuitive as conscious. Like his countryman Hans Arp and Arp's wife Sophie Täuber, Klee was somewhat influenced that year by the very flat rectangle arrangements of the Russian Constructivist Malevich. Like the Arps, Klee started to paint flatter color rectangle compositions, as we see in *Space Architecture* (Fig. 7) and *The Niesen* (Fig. 8). There is still spatial ambiguity in these treatments, but at least Klee was no longer trying to attack in the same picture the equally thorny problems of the color theme and transparent color depth. Compared to his *Composition: On a Motif from Hammamet* of 1914, there was already considerably more order and considerably less confusion.

Then, in a remarkable experiment of 1916, Klee arrived at the basis of his definitive color theme concept. As in *Once Emerged From the Gray of Night* (1918; Fig. 9), he began to set his own poems and other texts to color, as texts are set to music.[55] Unfortunately, the mere novelty of these *lieder* pictures, which Klee produced occasionally through 1921, has tended to obscure their real significance; his use of a virtually flat ground of rectangular color units as a setting shows how strongly he had come to equate such units with musical notes, and that he had come to view flatness as a fundamental characteristic of the independent color theme.

In 1919 Klee turned out what might be considered his first independent color rectangle composition—*With The Green Rectangle* (Fig. 10). Though primitive in terms of thematic development and still riddled with spatial irregularities, it represents an important stride. From 1919 on, color rectangle arrangements figured prominently as settings for Klee's drawings as well as for poetry.

In 1921-22, Klee flirted with a type of composition that he designated "fugal" (e.g., *Fugue in Red,* 1921, Fig. 11). In these pictures space is created by groups of spread stacks or "decks" of flat, colored forms, which diminish in size from front to back.[56] The "fugal" idea refers to the imitative successions in groups of similar forms, and to the temporal and spatial cadence created by the spread of the form stacks. The idea is playful, ingenious, and sometimes charming, but as in Delaunay's *Windows,* there is still no stable structural organization of either depth or depth layers. Moreover, these variegated forms are far from being neutral building blocks, like notes, since each form has its own intrinsic interest.

It was not until 1923 that Klee finally isolated the color theme problem from all external considerations. That year saw the first real florescence of his so-called *"magic-square"* pictures (e.g., *Harmony of Rectangles,* 1923.238; *Intensification of Color from the Static to the Dynamic,* 1923.67; *Alter Klang,* 1925, Fig. 12). Fully committed now to the flat color grid as the format for his color themes, Klee was at last free from the complications of color shape and depth. And since each color unit was standardized as a rectangular "note," he had taken an important step toward solving the problem of color continuity.[57] In the flat color grid, whether truly rectilinear or with the slight dynamic variations he usually preferred, Klee now possessed an absolute structure—like a musical staff—upon which he could compose in color. He could now begin to explore in earnest the internal difficulties and possibilities of the color theme—development, color harmony and "key," color dynamics and interval relationships (rhythm and movement of hue, value, and chroma)—all, of course, with an eye toward conveying expressive content through an absolute, rational structure, as melody does in music.[58]

In his perfected concepts of thematic color composition Klee had attained the positive, the absolute affirmative in art that his whole career had been a struggle to reach. He now could see how to develop pictorial construction to the point where construction no longer denied expression. To understand what this meant for his art, let us take a close look at two of his finest color rectangle compositions, *Alter Klang* (1925; Fig. 12) and *New Harmony* (1936; Fig. 13).

Alter Klang is not only the summit of Klee's achievements in color homophony (two-dimensional color themes), it is also one of his foremost masterworks. It is a deeply moving painting, powerful in the genius of its composition. It is a spectrum of evocations, ascending from the tenebrous gloom of deep blacks and greens around the edges to a serenely hopeful interplay of pinks and rich yellows at the center. *Alter Klang* is at once a paradigm of absolute pictorial construction and a definition of the possibilities of thematic color content.

As is always the case in Klee's art, the title of this work offers clues to the multiple levels of thought, purpose, and experience with which Klee invested it, and which help it to succeed visually. *Alter Klang,* literally "old sound," is a musical idiom with no precise English translation.[59] It suggests, in a very general sense, concepts of melody, harmony, and tonality that prevailed in music between the Renaissance and the nineteenth century. It was the group of qualities that Klee most loved in music. He appropriated the idiom for this masterpiece because he was here working with concepts of color harmony, value, chiaroscuro, and development that prevailed in painting during the same epoch.

The emergence of a softly lighted figure from a surround of deep darkness is of course a characteristic format of Western

painting, from Leonardo and Geertgen tot sint Jans, through Rembrandt, to David. But Klee did not, in *Alter Klang,* use the human or any other natural form as subject or armature. The new forms of the squares supplant natural contours as the boundaries between different colors. Thus color and light themselves became Klee's subject. They act as autonomous agents, molding a quietly haunting chiaroscuro—a chiaroscuro not of volume or physical space, but rather of vision alone. Gone are the narrative and representational elements that made these pictorial means meaningful to earlier eyes.

It was the rationalized, flat, and continuous surface of the grid format that made possible this decisive disengagement of pictorial space from physical, world space. Again, Klee was not alone in exploring this type of nonreferential picture space. The color rectangle movement was, from 1915 on, international in character. But Klee alone succeeded in transcending decorative pattern in pure neutral form color composition. Unlike the more construction-and-revolution-oriented Arps, Mondrian and Moholy-Nagy, Klee was at times a consciously historicizing eclectic. In his thinking, the best aspects of Expressionism, Impressionism, and really all art could be integrated into the idiomatic language of twentieth-century painting. And we cannot emphasize enough the point that Klee's highest goal was the synthesis of construction and expression, the "cool Romanticism."

For Klee, art and decoration were not synonymous. He never subscribed to the Constructivist-de Stijl notion that architectural design is supreme and painting subservient. One of the many reasons he chose not to work large was so his art could not be construed as wall-painting. For him, a painting worthy of the label "great art" had to possess profound dimensions, and it had to be more intimately related to human sensibility than to the format of a wall. And unlike the Constructivists, Klee was deeply involved with the affective power of pictorial light, especially light as "created by the movement of color."[60] In the 1920s Klee had not ceased to be concerned with the achievements of the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists. The color-rectangle composition *Constructive-Impressive* (1927.32) leaves us no doubt about that.

In *Alter Klang*, as in so many of Klee's color compositions, the overall effect is that of the softly vibrant luminosity of light passing through stained glass. Although a broad range of local colors is used, the picture is keyed, almost atmospherically, to a dominant green tonality. Frequently, Klee achieved such effects of light with transparent washes of thinned color, as we shall see in our discussion of his polyphonic paintings. When he used more opaque pigment, as in *Alter Klang,* part of the secret of his rich, velvety color textures lies in his use of dark underpaintings to give the colors body. This is one key difference between the technique and content of Klee's color grids and those of the Mondrian-Van Doesburg school, where color is painted flatly over plain, light grounds and where heavy lines enclose the colors. In Klee's compositions, color rules line unequivocally. Another difference lies in Klee's tendency to shift his color grids to the right, thereby giving them a certain dynamic impulse. "Pathos," Klee said, "is expressed in art as a motor impulse off the vertical, or as denial or disruption of the vertical."[61] A very understated feeling of striving or yearning—a "cool Romanticism"—is a distinctive component of *Alter Klang,* with the subtle deviation of its grid from absolute verticality. A certain playful element, as typical of Klee as it is of Mozart, is also present in the irregular sizes and shapes of the color squares.

Remarkably, it appears that a student work—one Klee encountered during his 1921-22 Bauhaus lecture course—was an important source of his thinking about thematic color development, and may well have stimulated the florescence of his color-rectangle art in 1923 and the development of *Alter Klang.* Klee spoke of this work in his lecture on January 30, 1922:

> I find inspiration for an additional example in a very pretty little collage on glass that came to my attention during our last exercise. It consisted entirely of square bits of paper, which, freely disposed side by side or overlapping, their positions ranging from horizontal-vertical to diagonal, produced a lively structural rhythm ... the overlapping arrangement produced a dynamic extending from brightness to deepest dark. The collage was particularly rich in contrasts, because as in the case of windows, the light was conceived as coming from behind.
>
> Even in the deep, dark tones there was a shift towards the individual. But the individual achieved its full dynamic expression in the rhythmic arrangement of squares organized according to their color type: blue, red, violet, etc. The outcome was a highly dynamic individuality of colors, based on a tonal-dynamic structural rhythm.[62]

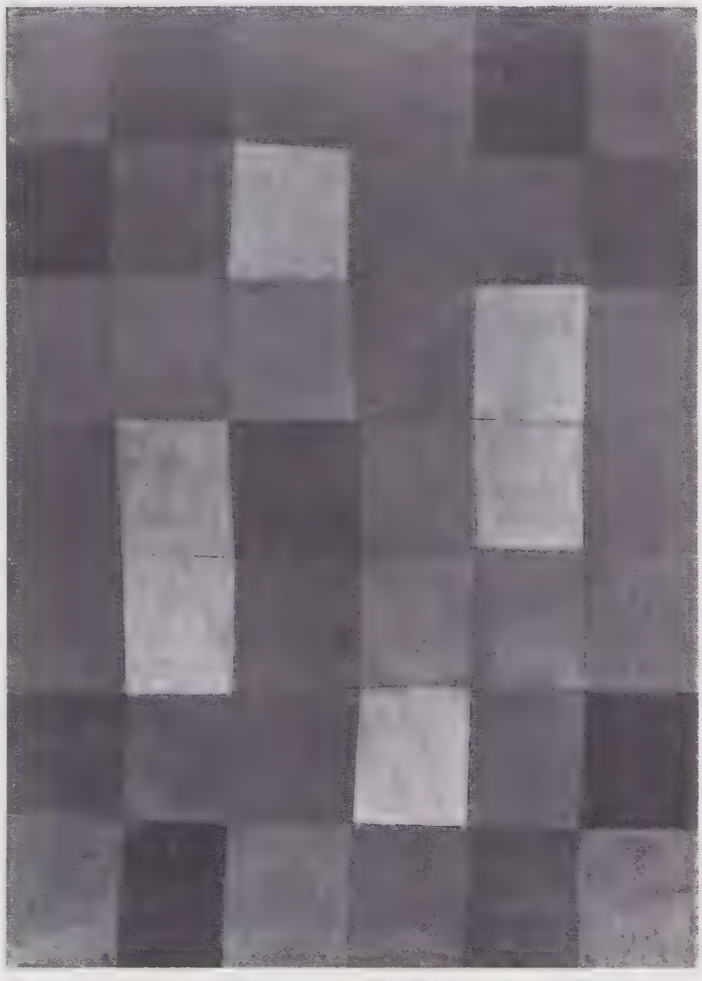


Fig. 13. Paul Klee, New Harmony, 1936. *Oil on canvas, 37 x 26".* *Courtesy Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.*

Klee is here commending one student's solution to the problem of organizing discrete color units into a significant, vital theme, that is, a continous, recognizable, non-repetitive, "individual" formal entity (as opposed to "dividual," divisible rhythmic patterns).[63] But when he speaks of the "dynamic extending from brightness to deepest dark," of the richness of contrast resulting from the "light ... conceived as coming from behind," of the "shift toward the individual ... even in the deep, dark tones," and the "full dynamic expression" and "highly dynamic individuality of colors, based on a tonal-dynamic structural rhythm," he could as well have been speaking of *Alter Klang,* which did not come into existence for another three years. One student work may have been the key inspiration for Klee's ultimate solution to a problem that had concerned him for well over a decade. This is a telling insight, both into Klee's synthetic attitudes and into the tremendous interaction between his art and teaching, an interaction which helped to shape his most ambitious enterprises between 1920 and 1933.

However, the single source most responsible for *Alter Klang* may lie not in Klee's teaching, nor even in his debts to Constructivism and Orphism. That source may be, remarkably, Leonardo's *John the Baptist* (Fig. 14) in the Louvre. We know that when Klee first saw the Louvre's Leonardos in 1905, he was so moved that he wrote in his diary, "Coming away from Leonardo, you don't ask for much of a career anymore," and he called Leonardo the "greatest pioneer in the handling of tonalities."[64]

Fig. 14. Leonardo da Vinci, John the Baptist, c. 1515. *Courtesy Louvre, Paris.*

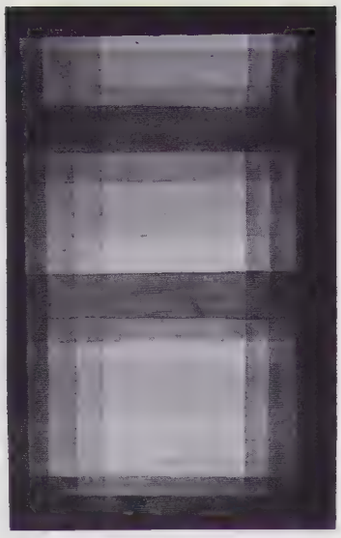


Fig. 16. Paul Klee, Architecture of Planes, 1923. *Watercolor, 11 x 7". Courtesy Felix Klee Collection.*

Fig. 15. Paul Klee, Chorale and Landscape, 1921. *Oil on canvas, 13-3/8 x 12". Courtesy W. Allenbach Collection, Berne.*

During his Italian journey of 1901-02, Klee had written in a letter to his fiancée that "all the greatest achievements in art derive from (Leonardo), at least so my spirit tells me."[65] Although the distance between these two works may be too great to speak of direct abstraction, there is such a marked similarity between their color feeling, tonality, and dynamics that Klee may well have used the early painting as a point of departure.

If this is indeed the case, then it would appear that Klee began by reducing the color range and continuous light-dark range of the Leonardo to discrete, integral qualities. Then, within the rationalized grid format he mapped out the values, color harmonies, and principal color movements. This is not merely a simplification or reduction of continuous value data, such as Klee had begun to investigate in 1907, and which computers have recently been able to achieve.[66] Nor obviously was it only a matter of plotting a color distribution chart of the Leonardo, as difficult as that would be. What Klee created is an *effective* distribution of the colors; that is, he arranged the flat, discrete color units in such a way that he achieved, incredibly, an overall effect closely related to the infinite complexities of Leonardo's misty *sfumato* and delicate chiaroscuro. This is a staggering feat, a truly awesome mastery of color. It was only Klee's rare genius that let him dare attempt to recapture in the language of twentieth-century art the sensibilities of Mozart and Leonardo, his two principal deities.

Through the deployment of carefully chosen green color-units around the composition, Klee caught the flavor of Leonardo's green underpainting. This underpainting, emerging from beneath the fugitive flesh pigments after centuries of aging, tends subtly to dominate Leonardo's works as we now see them. The burgundy squares in the Klee supply the quality of the darker reds in the flesh tone mixtures, and especially the dark auburn of the Baptist's hair. The yellows and tans are additional components of the flesh mixture. Finally, the four prominent notes of pink moving diagonally upward to the right account for the dominant pink flesh tones and the thrust of St. John's arm and pointing finger. This declamatory, arrowlike gesture forms the principal motif and movement in the Leonardo. Klee adopted it in *Alter Klang* as the direction of coalescence of the color energies. From out of the darkness, the colors rise and intensify toward the ruling motivic movement of the pinks.

A cardinal article of faith in Klee's aesthetic is the idea that art is a simulacrum of the Creation. Two special, representative forms of this analogy in Klee's thinking are the emergence of light from darkness and the coalescence of form out of chaos.[67] We may safely assume that these ideas were very much on Klee's mind as guiding principles in the creation of *Alter Klang,* a showcase work. Moreover, there can be little doubt that Klee, either before or after the fact, especially associated this particular picture with the saga of Creation. Consider the development, in stately, evolutionary rhythms, of earth tones, vegetation greens, and fruit burgundies out of primeval darkness, and the subsequent precipitation, at picture center, of the pinks and yellows of human flesh tones, which then advance diagonally upward to the right. This is, to say the least, a highly suggestive selection and ordering of colors. It is not extraordinary that a painter should attempt to embody a crucial philosophical concept within a major picture. Though such is not the fashion in our time, history offers many precedents. But none of this is forced upon our attention in *Alter Klang.* Philosophical ideas, aesthetic concepts, and historical allusions are embodied unobtrusively within a purely visual experience, an experience totally compatible with the formal ideals of serious twentieth-century painting.

Given that *Alter Klang* is a work of such memorable thematic integrity, ruled by an idea so marked and strong as to make it unique among Klee's color-rectangle compositions, it seems almost logical to deduce that it is based upon an earlier great work. Such a solid basis must have greatly aided Klee in establishing the powerful unity and coherence of color harmony, without the organizing aid of nature. It is especially logical that one of Klee's greatest achievements should have derived directly from Leonardo; that Klee should have wished to pay one tacit tribute to the man he regarded as his most illustrious predecessor, his patron saint among the Old Masters. This was Klee's true way of paying tribute, quietly and not overtly. And *Alter Klang* is a fully fitting tribute, for Klee made of this prodigious intellectual, analytical feat not a pedagogical demonstration or a sober, scientific exercise, but a fully developed, profoundly moving, great work of art—a world unto itself.

New Harmony of 1936 is really the last of Klee's independent color-rectangle compositions. It is a late, retrospective work, looking back, for the most part, to Klee's color thinking of the 1920s. There is the color softened, bodied, and textured by black underpainting. There are the playful irregularities of the color squares and the vertiginous undulations of the grid-lines. Yet Klee must have felt or intended there to be specific points of contrast between his *New Harmony (Neue Harmonie)* and his "old harmony," *Alter Klang,* of eleven years before. His titles are never throwaways. What, then, did he consider to be new about *New Harmony*?

The most obvious difference is the brighter, heightened chromaticism of the later work: along its central axis are arrayed dissonant (i.e., non-complementary) juxtapositions of orange and green squares. Dismissed along with the more traditional color consonance of *Alter Klang* is the Medieval stained glass effect, with its anterior light source. But the most important change from *Alter Klang* is the disappearance of the idea of emergence and growth, as embodied in its Renaissance-Baroque chiaroscuro. In *New Harmony* light is distributed more flatly and evenly across the surface. The development of the individually significant theme is replaced in *New Harmony*—as in much twentieth-century music and painting—by a more uniform distribution of compositional interest. *Alter Klang* develops with dramatic intensity from the edges toward the center; *New Harmony* is anchored firmly at each corner by squares of blue-gray, and is tightened all around by a border of rhythmically alternating medium and dark values. This equal stressing of the image across the frame takes the emphasis off temporality—development in time—and promotes instantaneity, the total, immediate view.

The principle of bilateral inverted symmetry governs the compositional order of *New Harmony,* supplanting the organizing principle of thematic continuity: that is, the right half of *New Harmony* is an inverted mirror image of the left half. The cross correspondence of color units and their respective weights, which oppose and balance each other, effects what Klee called a "dynamic equilibrium." It is upon this equilibrium that the structural unity of *New Harmony* is founded.

Klee had long recommended compositional mirroring to his students as an aid in bringing pictorial structures to life.[68] But as we have seen, his main illustrative model was the technique of contrapuntal inversion, as used in eighteenth-century music. To repeat, in the music of Mozart and Bach, Haydn and the earlier Beethoven, polyphonic structures are used to temper the expressive content of individual themes, and to carry thematic continuity through several voices. The simultaneous (above and below) layering of themes mitigates the temporal message of the individual. The true musical analogy to the sequential (left-to-right) mirroring in *New Harmony* is not to be found in eighteenth-century music, but rather in twentieth-century music, specifically in the music of the Schoenberg school, the "Second Viennese School," which in Klee's day meant "modern" and "new."

In fact, there can be little doubt that, as Klee referred in *Alter Klang* both to old music and old painting, so he consciously intended a marked analogy between *New Harmony* and the non-thematic, "twelve-tone" music of Schoenberg.[69] In this monodic (not polyphonic) type of music, the composer would begin by selecting a row of twelve notes—the "tone row." The persistence of this row, which is serially repeated in inverted, retrograde (backwards), and retrograde inverted forms and transpositions, is supposed to supplant tonality and thematic development as principles of coherence. We need only note that Klee used exactly twelve tones of color in *New Harmony* (excluding the neutral gray rhythm base and the black underpainting), and that he inverted the left hand sequence of twelve colors for the right side. The tendency of much twelve-tone music to be fleetingly brief, compressed, and instantaneous makes the analogy with *New Harmony* even more pronounced.

There is, however, a certain paradox in this analogy. As I have said, the color content of *New Harmony*—as opposed to its structure—is in no genuine conflict with Klee's earlier color compositions. The tranquil, Mozartian afflatus still blows through this modern structure. It is an almost autumnal harmony we see here, late in Klee's life and career. There is none of the agitation we find in Webern's music, or in the syncopated ecstasies of Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie-Woogie.* It is as if Klee once again wanted to show, or to satisfy himself in a partly humorous manner, that he could make any kind of color structure a vehicle for the sort of content he wished to express. But the main value of *New Harmony* for us, apart from its quality, lies in Klee's effort to define the opposite of a color theme, in the language of his color themes. In so doing, he offered us a great aid in understanding the complex nature of thematic color development.

The Development of Color Polyphony

Although the flat color rectangle theme became a major component of Klee's identity and was the basis of some of his finest pictures, we should bear it in mind that he viewed this format at least partly as a means to an end, and not as a complete end in itself. His ultimate goal was the development of color polyphony, the simultaneous combination of flat themes in depth. Thematic content is a crucial ingredient, but Klee's ideal lies in the Olympian, absolute content of Higher Polyphony.

It is clear that by 1917, Klee, with the aid of Delaunay, had come to see pictorial polyphony as inextricably bound up in transparent color depth. It is not at all clear that he had any firm ideas of how actually to compose polyphonic pictures, or what that really meant. Not until 1921 do we see the first indications of a solid direction. In *Chorale and Landscape* (Fig. 15) Klee began to create pictorial space by overlapping and intersecting rectilinear color planes, each exactly parallel to the plane of the picture surface. In the next few years, Klee experimented with a huge variety of pictorial formats which he considered polyphonic in one sense or another.[70] But he had already settled

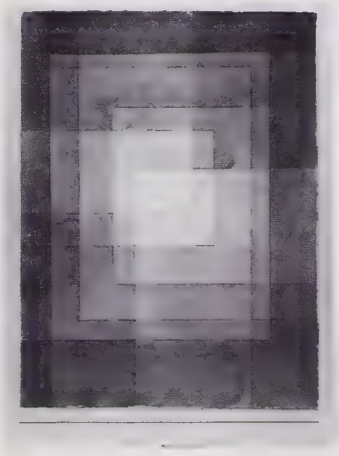


Fig. 17. Paul Klee, Polyphonic Setting for White, 1930. *Watercolor on paper, on cardboard, 13 x 9½". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

▲ **Fig. 19.** Paul Klee, Seated Girl, 1909. *Oil on cardboard, 13¼ x 8½". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

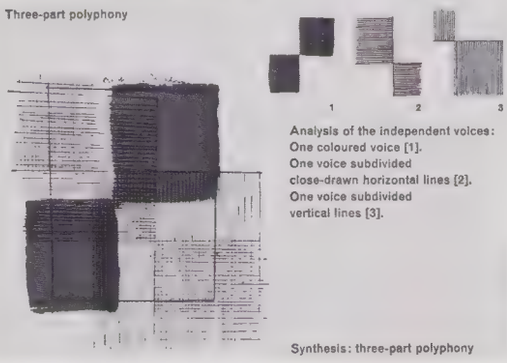


Fig. 18. Paul Klee, Illustration of Pictorial Polyphony, from Bauhaus Course Notes, 1921-22.

on the overlapping, parallel, rectilinear plane format as his main hope. Begun in his first year at the Bauhaus, it was expressed in the Constructivist, rectilinear language of the Bauhaus, intelligible to Klee's colleagues and accessible to those in his artistic milieu. For ten years his most important polyphonic works—some of his finest pictures—were constructed in this manner (e.g., Architecture of Planes, 1923, Fig. 16; *Polyphonic Setting for White*, 1930, Fig. 17). And when he "analyzed pictures for their polyphonic style" with his students, as he did from the beginning of his teaching career, it was this concept of overlapping, transparent, rectilinear planes that he presented as a definition of pictorial polyphony (Fig. 18).[71] This is indeed a much more precise, more logical, more easily analyzable means of organizing color depth and modulating color contrasts: it makes Delaunay's approach look almost eccentric. Most important, the rectilinear structure must have seemed to Klee to promise an eventual accommodation of the rectangular notes of his color themes.

But that last, most crucial promise was never fulfilled. Klee was never able to compose and combine independent color themes within the overlapping plane format. Though it was more rational, it was still not rational enough. Like Delaunay, Klee ran up against the problem of broken, discontinuous space layers. In overlapping plane constructions, as in Delaunay's *Windows*, there can exist no fully separate layers of depth to sustain the independent development of color themes, at least as Klee had defined color themes. And if one tried simply to lay a transparent color rectangle theme over another color rectangle theme, one would annihilate rather than ameliorate the effects of both themes.

"Counter-Pointillism"

By 1930, Klee was coming to realize that he needed to create a type of planar color-space layer that would be more unified, and yet, somehow, more transparent. To that end he began to cultivate a pictorial device which, like his color-rectangle themes, had roots in the beginnings of his art; namely, his "so-called Pointillism."[72] In *Seated Girl* (Fig. 19), a very curious effort of 1909, sparsely distributed dabs and splotches of color

Fig. 20. Paul Klee, Polyphony, 1932. *Tempera on canvas, 26¼ x 41¾".*
Courtesy Kunstmuseum, Basel, Collection E. Hoffman.

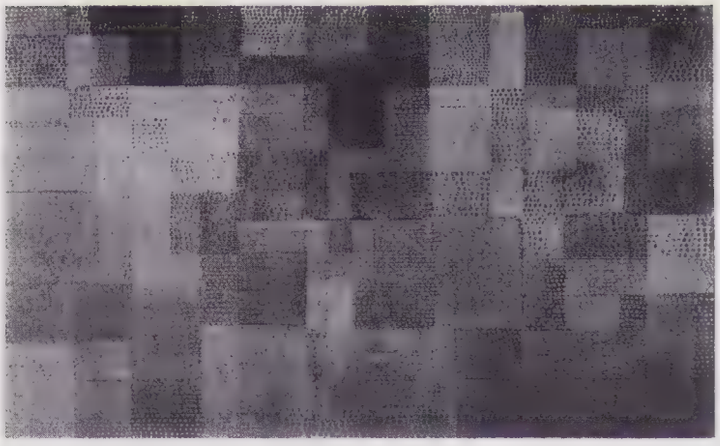
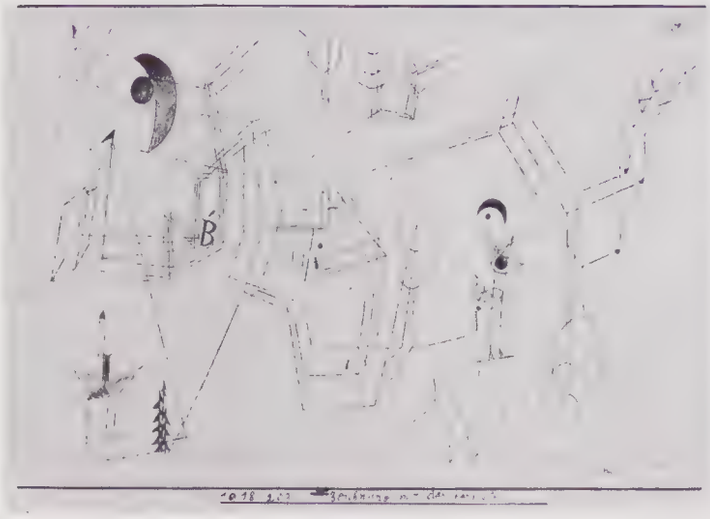


Fig. 21. Paul Klee, Drawing with the Fermata, 1918. *Pen and ink on paper.*



create and fill space, and declare the existence of a surface plane—a transparent plane through which we view the figure. Klee no doubt borrowed this technique directly from children's art, which he had begun to consider around that time, in response to the early artistic endeavors of his son (born in 1907) and to the rising talk about primitivism in new art. Of course, the dabs refer also to the detached brushwork of Impressionism and the dots of Neo-Impressionism. Although *Seated Girl* is a very crude work, which appears to us awkward and somewhat naive, it bears Klee's "special class" (*Sonderklasse*) marking—"Skl"—which means that he felt it to be a picture of exceptional importance, in his development if not in quality.

In later works, such as *Composition: On a Motif from Hammamet* and *The Niesen*, he used small areas of more carefully worked dots to gain effects of space and color, in the manner of Delaunay's 1910-11 pictures. But around 1930 Klee started using color dots to lay carefully organized, transparent screens across entire pictures. He had discovered a means of "filling or determining a picture surface" without blocking perception of the ground.[73] It was a means, moreover, that synthesized elements from two of his most crucial sources—children's art and Orphism.

A picture surface at once full and open was a momentous innovation. It finally enabled Klee to develop separate color themes in the same picture—one theme in the ground and one in the frontal plane. The result is a simultaneous interaction of truly independent themes. The color dots do not so much serve to intensify light, as in Neo-Impressionism, as they do to create depth and to carry a separate color voice. Hence Klee referred to his technique as "so-called pointillism." We might think of it as "Counter-pointillism."

By 1932 Klee had brought this system to a conclusive definition. He provided, in *Polyphony* (Fig. 20), a clear demonstration of how it works. In the picture ground he composed a color-rectangle theme. Over this he set another color theme, composed in the dot screen. There exist two fully independent themes, hence the possibility for thematic, expressive content; yet when we see the picture we perceive it as a fluid, coloristic unity. As in late eighteenth-century polyphony, what impresses us most is the overall tonal organization, the simultaneous harmonic relationships, rather than the sequential harmonic relationships. And notwithstanding the coloristic fluidity and depth of this painting, it remains extremely easy to analyze, as Klee demanded of any perfect work of art, into its component elements of point, line, plane, and color.[74]

Klee's extraordinary insight into music, aided by special inspiration from Mozart, Fux, and Delaunay, had enabled him to break down the complex "musical question" that had plagued and motivated so many leading painters of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries—i.e., what kind of painting can be completely as free (absolute), truly as sublime, and at once as accessible and as sophisticated as the greatest music? In Klee's "exact experimental" thinking the question became:

1) What kind of rational, absolute structural formats and systems of articulation can help to free painters from the prison of infinite possibilities?

2) How can we compose monodic themes, purely of color, to carry primary content in painting?

3) How can we unite such themes in simultaneous, polyphonic harmony and transubstantiate their primary content into absolute content?

4) How can our simultaneous harmony function as a sublime, fluid unity, and still be as clearly, straightforwardly organized as the music of Mozart, and as subject to precise analysis as if it were governed by a score? In brief, how can we achieve a tectonic-lyrical synthesis in painting?

5) In more general terms, what are we going to do about the basic, timeless problems of pictorial art? How are we going to handle and control pictorial space? How are we going to handle and control color expression?

For Klee, polyphony was the answer that embraced the entire problem. So he set out to establish its fundamental principles for the art of painting, as Fux had done for music two centuries earlier.

As a systematic means of controlling depth and color interaction, pictorial polyphony had immense historical implications for Klee. He was well aware that developments in twentieth-century painting portended an eventual rejection of pictorial depth.[75] A significant proportion of his own work tended toward flatness. But he feared that flat painting would eventually run aground in the shallows of decoration; without depth, there was no possibility for absolute content as he understood it. From his historical vantage Klee saw the importance of preserving depth "in an age when its appreciation was fast waning." He therefore needed to make pictorial depth viable within the twentieth-century context—to liberate it from illusory and descriptive tasks, to rationalize it, and to point up its character as pure means. His didactic objectives demanded a quantifiable, teachable system for the organization of pictorial depth to replace the "eminently teachable" but dead metaphor of orthogonal spatial constructions. As Fux had taken a petrified, banalized, academicized tradition of counterpoint and forged it into a living legacy, the seed-bed for the renaissance of a revitalized polyphony, so Klee wanted to deacademicize pictorial depth and make of it a living, edifying legacy.

Moreover, Klee viewed transparent color interaction not as a radical innovation, but rather as part of a long tradition in painting which in essence went back to Leonardo, and had roots in the glazing and incipient colorism of the early Flemish masters. The historically conscious Klee understood that any art which aspires to ultimate greatness can not deny its own history. It must come to terms with that history, embrace it, and then overcome it. Mozart did not invent polyphony. He recapitulated its long tradition and brought it to perfection, to its ultimate development.[76] In a very real sense, Fux had paved the way for that comprehensive recapitulation through his own interim recapitulation, for he had codified the whole history of polyphonic practice into a form that could readily be assimilated by students. And, in the judgment of his contemporaries and countless later admirers:

> Fux dealt with the fundamental principles of harmony and counterpoint, which have always existed, which are still valid, and which will remain valid as long as the system of the world and the rules of its existence remain unchanged . . . Though taste may alter, the fundamental principles of composition do not.[77]

Convinced of the need for a similar undertaking in painting, Klee diverted huge amounts of professional energy from his "original realm of psychic improvisation" toward his struggles to codify and systematize essential, fundamental aspects of simultaneous color painting, and so to lay foundations for the future. Through the concept of pictorial polyphony he must have hoped to deacademicize and to safeguard the traditions of pictorial depth and transparent color for a later generation of painters, even as Fux had "safeguarded the polyphonic tradition."

Ad Parnassum

Equipped now with an understanding of Klee's use of counterpoint and polyphony, we can begin to apprehend his purposes in *Ad Parnassum* and the meaning of his allusion to Fux's treatise. And we can begin to understand why he decided here, for the first and only time in his career, to commit himself to a painting truly substantial both in scale and in scope. In *Ad Parnassum* there is no trace of "psychic improvisation," nor is there any suggestion of experimentation. This is Klee's most complex painting, carefully planned and painstakingly executed, rich in content, subtle, fluid, and yet ruled by a bold, powerful conception. In no other single painting did Klee ever invest so much. His exceptional investment becomes thoroughly understandable, once we realize that he intended *Ad Parnassum* to be his ultimate polyphonic work—the summary and culmination of a quarter-century of dedicated explorations. For, as its title suggests, *Ad Parnassum* is Klee's codification of pictorial counterpoint and polyphony.

We have followed Klee's efforts to develop viable structural formats for color themes and for the simultaneous organization of color themes. And we have seen how he finally arrived, in *Polyphony*, at a format which he considered paradigmatic. But *Polyphony* is a framework, not a living, breathing work of polyphony. In concentrating on problems of construction, Klee had neglected the development of the individual color themes. Distinct color movement and contrast are lacking, so the harmony of the whole is an inanimate, inactive harmony. *Ad Parnassum* was Klee's next picture,[78] and he wanted it to be a *magnum opus,* a picture which would stand comparison with the Parnassian themes of earlier masters. So he needed now to breathe life into this static, architectural armature, and to use it to generate some kind of profound, dynamic content.

Klee had, first of all, to compose for his new polyphonic format color themes as vital and expressive as those in his best color-rectangle pictures. For the ground of *Ad Parnassum* he conceived a gentle but insistent theme in tonic blue, on motifs formed of gray, earth browns and greens, pale, very yellow greens, and several hues of blue.[79] A rhythmic deployment of the blue and yellow-green rectangles dominates the color movement in this theme. Out of a relative chaos at picture left, an order begins to emerge at the center. A progression of yellow-green rectangles descends diagonally from top center, and a corresponding progression of blue rectangles arises from bottom center, leading a surge of color energy through a stepped-pyramid shape that peaks—like a cadence resolving to the tonic note—in a single blue rectangle near the mid-point of the right picture edge. A horizontal progression of browns rolls through the center of the picture, reinforcing the main current. At the bottom right corner, a sloping, gravid mass of neutral grays and earth tones helps further to define the main color movement by shaping, resistance, and contrast. In this first color theme, Klee successfully realized the ideal he had described to his students as the "dynamic expression" of a "rhythmic arrangement of squares organized according to their color type," resulting in "a highly dynamic individuality of colors, based on a tonal-dynamic structural rhythm."[80]

In planning his *magnum opus* Klee evidently decided not to neglect line, which was so much a part of him. He must have felt also that line could contribute additional dimensions to the epic content he wanted for this epic work. So he turned next to his

Fig. 25. Paul Klee, Illustration "Happy Individuals" from Bauhaus Course Notes, 1921-22.

◄ **Fig. 22.** Paul Klee, The Light and Other Things, 1931. *Oil on canvas 37½ x 38½". Courtesy Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich.*

▲ **Fig. 23.** Passage from Mozart's Fantasia for Piano, K396.

Fig. 24. Passage from Mozart's Sonata for Piano, K570.

"fundamental graphic talent," that surpassing mastery of expressive line and form that was his principal tool for "psychic improvisation."[81] Of course, a summative, didactic work did not admit of improvisation; it demanded instead a rational, controlled use of line. Klee had a ready answer to that demand in the form of linear counterpoint.

It was in *Ad Parnassum* that Klee realized, for the first time in an actual painting, the full potential of his theories about contrapuntal drawing. In many drawings and several paintings, starting about 1917 (e.g., *Drawing with the Fermata,* 1918, Fig. 21; *Arctic Thaw,* 1920.128), Klee had used contrapuntal, imitative drawing techniques for organization, control, and interest. In *The Light and Other Things* (1931; Fig. 22) he had already experimentally combined contrapuntal drawing with counterpointillism, as if in anticipation of *Ad Parnassum.* But in all these earlier works the drawing exhibits the delicate, playful, ornamental character of Klee's early and middle period graphic style. For his pedagogical *exemplum* and masterwork, Klee now wanted a graphic image that was more monumental without being ponderous, more serious without being sober, and more instructive without being pedantic. He also wanted an image as readily recognizable, memorable, and easily describable as the epic motifs which often characterize great works of music—because cognition is the beginning of understanding. It was here, for the first time in a major picture, that Klee risked using the bold, brushdrawn line that came to dominate his later work (after 1937). With this new type of line Klee set down the "mountain" and the "gateway," the two voices that form the striking signature of *Ad Parnassum.* By taking simple, forceful shapes, such as are often found in melodic lines in music (e.g., Figs. 23 and 24), he created a contrapuntal drawing that is as instructive as the two-part examples in Fux's *Gradus.* And by aligning the mountain peak with the vertex of the "conductor's baton stroke in two-part time"[82] (right side of the "gateway"), he produced a witty, literal illustration of the concept of *punctus contra punctum.*

This signature is conceived in a mode somewhere between that which Klee called "thematic in two voices with dynamic

accent on the relatively structural part" (Figs. 3 and 4), and that which he characterized as "happy individuals"—motifs which conform to a structural setting, yet preserve their individuality (Fig. 25).[83] The "conductor's baton stroke" provides a lively "dynamic accent" on the "relatively structural voice" (the "gateway") and it also creates the effect of contrary contrapuntal motion, opposing the movement of the upper voice (the "mountain"). This sort of contrapuntal mirroring is one of the pictorial devices that Klee had long recommended to his students as a means to help "bring complex processes to life."[84] We find in the upper voice another such device—i.e., the cutting of lines with the picture edge, a possibility which Klee suggested in his lectures on pictorial movement.[85] By so truncating the "mountain" slopes in *Ad Parnassum* he produced the effect of melodic flow and continuity beyond the limits of what is seen. And by using the motions of both voice-lines to imitate contrapuntally the diagonal components of the ground theme color movement, he furthered the processes of growth and dynamic development. His remarkable two-part linear invention became, then, the second stage in his work of living polyphony.

Next, Klee introduced a second contrapuntal-pictorial device. The decrescendo yellow-creme thrust across the center of the picture and the crescendo thrust of red at the upper right constitute a borrowing from the "Canon of Color Totality," Klee's theoretical color paradigm (Figs. 5 and 6), and they echo Klee's fugal paintings of 1921-22.[86] The central thrust, with its point just above the final blue note in the first color theme, adopts and powerfully drives forward the dominant color movement established in that theme. The thrust at the upper right has a quieter, but equally important, dual role. In its "canonic" function it participates in and contributes to the general left-to-right sweep in *Ad Parnassum.* But in its vector function—for these thrusts are also Klee's arrow-vectors in disguise—it contends against that sweep with a right-to-left force. This is one of the ways in which Klee avoided in *Ad Parnassum* the "banality" that he found in "simple movement." "The goal is achieved only when movement is met by countermovement. . .when movement becomes continuous, infinite."[87]

Finally, Klee set down the staccato rhythms of the second color theme, the dot-screen. But he did not paint on the colors directly, as he had in *Polyphony.* He used instead a technique he had employed earlier the same year in *Spring Picture* (1932.65), a technique which combines counter-pointillism with glazing.[88] Over the entire painting, he laid a screen of white dots. Then, over each white dot, he applied a wash or series of washes of the colors he wanted in each passage. This technique gave Klee an extremely precise means of control in the orchestration of colors. With it he masterfully created the vibrant, medium blue tonal band that flows through the center of the picture, separating the very bright blue tonal band (the "violins," as Klee would say)[89] at the top from the darker values ("cellos") arrayed along the picture bottom.

Most important, the glazed-dot technique enabled Klee to gauge accurately how far he could go with strong local color in the second theme, without destroying the overall tonal unity of the work. In the lower left corner and in the "V" of the "conductor's baton stroke" he built up dense color masses of very hot oranges and reds. These colors then become diffused through the areas of yellow-creme and tan dots in and just below the left hand of the central "canonic" thrust. The orange and red next appear suspended in a narrow band of the medium blue dots, about one-third the way up the "mountain." This diagonal, secondary color movement then concludes in the bright orange of the "sun" disc and the red of the upper "canonic" thrust. Far from disrupting the overall harmonic and tonal unity of *Ad Parnassum,* this dynamic, contrapuntal voicing of reds and oranges helps to bring that harmony in blue to life; helps to make it a vibrant, active harmony—the perfect synthesis of local and atmospheric color, as alive as the natural, hazy-cool, blue harmony of a Peloponnesian landscape at sundown.

In *Ad Parnassum* Klee recapitulated a quarter-century of directed, methodical experiments with the rhythmic, harmonic, melodic, thematic, static, and dynamic properties of point, line, plane, and color. He incorporated into this work the principal artistic iconography of his entire career up to 1933—color patches, counter-pointillism, fugal forms and arrow-vectors, and even natural forms which recall *The Neisen,* and harken back to his boyhood watercolors of his native Bern and its surroundings.[90] And out of these various elements he composed a fluid, unified, definitive polyphonic painting, an absolute painting with both independent formal life and rich associative possibilities. In brief, *Ad Parnassum* is a comprehensive work, the only comprehensive work of Klee's career.

Though Klee's oeuvre is one of small-scale works and rapid formats, it is not surprising that he decided to undertake a major, comprehensive picture late in 1932.[91] There can be little doubt that by that point he had forseen the end of his teaching career. For years he had been anxious about the rising power of the Nazis, and by late 1932 the political situation in Germany had become very tense.[92] It was, of course, the Nazi policy of "restoring the indigenous character of the art schools" that resulted in Klee's dismissal from the Dusseldorf academy early in 1933. With a dramatic change impending in his life, it is logical that he desired to recapitulate the experiments in which he had, for so long, sought a theoretical infrastructure for art and art instruction.

Moreover, Klee must have known that a radical change in his art would accompany the great change in his life. The demands and activities of teaching—the need to rationalize and communicate a body of ideas—had been a major stimulus to his higher ambitions. It was not until 1920, the year of his appointment to the Bauhaus, that Klee began fully to commit himself to the purposes that had motivated his entry into painting: to help "perfect" the art, to lay the foundations for Higher Polyphony. Only then did he successfully resolve his artistic schizophrenia by, so to speak, yielding to it completely. Only then did the experimental, ambitious, historically conscious side of his art attain a status fully equal to (and fully separate from) his "original realm of psychic improvisation." But after 1933, the experimental side of Klee's art virtually ceased to exist. His approach ceased to be encyclopedic, and polyphony ceased to be a ruling concept of his work. He turned increasingly back into his "original realm." After his teaching career ended he seems to have been less and less willing, or less and less able to deal with the stupendous difficulties of absolute color composition. The programmatic investigation of color ceased to be the sole vehicle for his highest ambitions, and the bold line discovered in *Ad Parnassum* grew ever bolder and more dominant as he returned to his "fundamental graphic talent." In *Ad Parnassum* Klee marked this turning point in his career. He here drew together the graphic and the coloristic, his "original realm" and his "exact experimental" realm. His art, which had been divided, became one art again. And through this relatively heroic Fuxian recapitulation, he liberated himself from his obligations to his historical vision, so he could return to the freedom of his highly personal art and the kind of poetic content he so cherished.

Finally, as befits a comprehensive work, *Ad Parnassum* is also a quiet manifesto, a statement of Klee's highest ambitions and purposes. But as befits Klee, who generally shunned "machines" and voluble enterprises, that statement is presented indirectly, in the form of an extraordinary visual-verbal pun. Just as the title *Ad Parnassum* may be taken either as a musical-literary or a geographic-poetic reference, so the main formal elements of this painting may be read as lying either in different registration in the same plane or in similar registration in different planes—i.e., either as a "score" or as an abstract landscape with Mount Parnassus, a gateway, clouds, and a setting sun.[93] So Klee subtly and wittily suggested that the gateway to the Muses' home is constructed of melody and designed according to the principles of rhythm and counterpoint. He once again proposed the unique value of polyphony as a road to the realization in art of nature's forms and creative processes. And most important, he again pointed out the route that he believed art should and must ultimately travel—"from the static to the dynamic"; from the architectonic to the point where architecture and poetry are one, where the symbolic is transmuted into the absolute.

1. "Exakter Versuch im Bereich der Kunst," *Bauhaus, Vierteljahr Zeitschrift für Gestaltung,* II, 2-3, 1928, 17.
2. Klee considered Mozart's "Jupiter" Symphony the "highest attainment in art"—Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee* (New York, 1954), 73. In a letter to his son Felix (Dec. 26, 1929) Klee expressed the belief that "Mozart perfected himself"—Felix Klee, *Paul Klee* (New York, 1962), 64. In "Paul Klee als Musiker," *Tages-Anzeiger* (Zurich), 14 (Jan. 17, 1953), 13, Karl Grebe, who played cello in Klee's household ensembles in Weimar, offers a fascinating discussion of the total Mozart-orientation of Klee's violin technique and musical mentality. For general discussions of Klee's music background and lifelong preoccupation with music, see esp. Grohmann, *op. cit.,* and Richard Verdi, "Musical Influences upon the Art of Paul Klee," *Museum Studies, 3* (1968), 81-107.
3. Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 70-71.
4. Austrian composer and theorist; b. Styria, 1660; d. Vienna, 1741. Fux served as Hofcompositor (composer for the Imperial Court at Vienna), was later appointed Kapellmeister at St. Stephens, and from 1715 to his death, served as Hofkapellmeister (Imperial Conductor). In this last post, Fux was the most prominent figure in the musical world of his time, and he was held in great esteem by most of his contemporaries, including J.S. Bach. On Fux, L. von Köchel's study and catalogue (Vienna, 1872), to which the reknowned Mozart scholar devoted the "other half" of his career, remains the basic work. Among more recent literature see Andreas Liess, *Johann Josef Fux* (Vienna, 1948), *Fuxiana* (Vienna, 1958), and the Fux article in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* XIV (Kassel and Basel, 1955), pp. 1159-75; in English, E. Wellesz, *Fux* (London, 1965) is brief, but informative and more up to date. Fux's *Gradus ad Parnassum* was first published in Latin (1725), and was subsequently translated into German (1742), Italian (1761), French (1763), and English (1791). A modern English translation of most of the *Gradus* may be found in *Steps to Parnassus; The Study of Counterpoint,* ed. and tr. Alfred Mann (New York, 1943, and London, 1965).
5. *Steps to Parnassus,* x.
6. On display in Mozart's *Gebürtshaus* in Salzburg is Leopold Mozart's (Wolfgang's father and first mentor) annotated, first edition copy of the *Gradus ad Parnassum.* Interestingly, the frontispiece to this edition is an engraving after C. van Schuppen, which shows a composer, works in hand, climbing a stairway to the top of Mount Parnassus, there to be crowned with laurel by Apollo. We know that Klee had visited the birthplace of his idol Mozart as early as 1899, as recorded in his diary—*The Diaries of Paul Klee, 1898-1918,* ed. Felix Klee (Berkeley, 1968), 28(no. 72). (Subsequently cited here as *Diaries.)* He also spent a week there in 1919 with his family (information courtesy of his son Felix, from an interview in Bern on March 20, 1974).

Haydn compiled an *Elementarbuch der verschiedenen Gattungen des Kontrapuncts, aus dem grosseren Werke des Kapellmeisters Fux.* Beethoven's teacher Albrechtsberger similarly based his own counterpoint treatise upon that of Fux. See Liess, *Fuxiana,* 56ff.
7. *Steps to Parnassus,* ed. and tr. Mann, xi. By Fux's time, the contrapuntal style of his main model Palestrina, which came to be known as the "strict" or "learned" style, had fallen out of favor. It had been largely supplanted by the newer "galant" style, which tended toward a melody-and-accompaniment approach.
8. Klee's diaries and correspondence are filled with penetrating musical insights and critical analyses of musical works and performances. In 1911 and 1912, he was corresponding critic of Munich art, music, opera and theater for the Bernese periodical *Die Alpen.*
9. The two men apparently first met at a Bauhaus production of Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* (1923), to which Hindemith had contributed. In 1930, the composer visited Klee in his studio. In a series of letters to his wife (May, 1930), Klee discussed Hindemith's visit and some of his compositions, and he expressed admiration for the composer's intellectual control and the "certain starkness toward spiritual matters. . .deeply rooted in his personality." See Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 67, 70, 74 and F. Klee, *op. cit.,* 101-02. Since Hindemith was, in those years, deeply pondering the achievements of Fux (cf. n. 10) and since both he and Klee were very much concerned with problems of artistic pedagogy, it would be safe to assume that Fux came up in their conversations substantially and not infrequently.
10. Hindemith's introduction to his composition textbook, *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* (Mainz, 1940), is largely an encomium of Fux. He says there that "Vielleicht wäre die Satzkunst wirklich dem Niedergang verfallen gewesen. . .wäre nicht im Fuxschen "Gradus" ein Damn gegen Willkür and Übertreibung, ein Mass für tonsetzerisches Können errichtet worden," I, 16.
11. It must be pointed out that in his pictorial applications of these two concepts, Klee drew between them a distinction that does not exist in music. He used the term "polyphony" to describe and denote certain types of pictorial organization in depth. On the other hand, his "contrapuntal" ideas deal almost exclusively with linear and formal organization within a single plane. In music, any specimen of contrapuntal writing is by definition polyphonic, though the term 'counterpoint' often suggests a special emphasis on order, basic structural principles, and a strictly imitative style. The sense in which Klee used the term "polyphony" is derived in particular from its application in late eighteenth-century music, where separate voices are often fully independent, rather than imitative, and convey independent thematic content.
12. In a lecture of mid-1922, Gropius advocated intensive instruction in the "counterpoint of the forms of construction" *(Kontrapunkt der Konstruktionsform)*—M. Franciscono, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar* (Urbana, 1971), 246.

In an article on "Abstraktion in Tanz und Kostum" (1928) Schlemmer wrote, "Gleich der Musik von Joh. Seb. Bach, die Abstrakt zu nemmen ist, weil sie abgeschieden von allen natur-illusionistichen Elementen, rein aus den Mittelin des jeweiligen Instruments heraus entwickelt und kontrapunktischmathematisch gefügt. . ." Quoted in *Oskar Schlemmer und die abstrakte Bühne,* exhibition catalogue (Kunstgewerbemuseum, Zurich, 1961), 28.

In a lecture of 1930, he said "In our time the masters of the Bauhaus have tried individually to achieve law in art, partially out of necessity, partly to help them to teach; partly also this endeavor stemmed from the wish, already formulated by Goethe, to find for art, as had been found for music, a rule of harmony and counterpoint, and so to reach a similar exactitude." Quoted in Marlborough Gallery's *Painters of the Bauhaus* catalogue (London, 1962), 75.

Itten, Klee's colleague at the Bauhaus until 1923, gave his diary the subtitle "Contributions to a Counterpoint of Pictorial Art" *(Tagebuch. Beiträge zu einem Kontrapunkt der bildenden Kunst,* Berlin, 1930).

Of course, by the 1920s the application of the term "counterpoint" and related musical concepts to visual art had a long history. That history began in musical-pictorial analogies in Aristotle's *Poetics,* was furthered in the color theories of Newton, in Goethe's *Farbenlehre,* in Delacroix's *Paragone,* the comments of Van Gogh, Gaugain, Matisse, and the writings of Baudelaire. Discussing the Salon of 1846, Baudelaire had said, in an extended musical metaphor, "On trouve dan la couleur l'harmonie, la mélodie, et le contrepoint"—*Baudelaire II: Critique,* ed. P. Jouve (Fribourg, 1944), 32-34. (Klee had read an edition of Baudelaire's writings in 1907—cf. *Diaries,* 219(no. 804).

Contrapuntal concepts figured prominently in the thinking of the Orphists and Synchromists. Frank Kupka, who had exhibited a *Fugue á deux couleurs* in the Salon d'Automne of 1912, once remarked: ". . .I believe I can find something between sight and hearing and I can produce a fugure in colors as Bach has done in music"—quoted in "Orphism—Latest of the Painting Cults," *The New York Times* (Oct. 19, 1913). Stanton Macdonald-Wright said, ". . .One can see that I strive to make my art bear the same relation to painting that polyphony bears to music"—in *Forum Exhibition of Modern Painters,* Anderson Galleries (New York, Mar. 18-25, 1916). This usage was picked up by German painters in the circle of Franz Marc, August Macke and Kandinsky, starting around 1910-11.

The Swedish formalist painter and filmmaker Viking Eggeling began around 1917 to formulate his *Generalbass der Malerei.* His ideas were picked up by Hans Richter, with whom Eggeling began to collaborate in Zurich in 1918. Cf. Richter's article "My Experience with Movement in Painting and Film," in G. Kepes, ed., *The Nature and Art of Motion* (N.Y., 1965), 142-57. On polyphonic ideas in Eggeling's usage and in the Germanic cultural milieu generally, see L. O'Konor, *Viking Eggeling 1880-1925, Artist and Filmmaker, Life and Work* (Stockholm, 1971), 53, 75, 88-90.
13. The translated passage is from J.S. Bach's *Sonata in G Major for Violin and Cembalo.* It is reproduced in *The Thinking Eye—The Notebooks of Paul Klee, Vol. I,* ed. J. Spiller, tr. R. Manheim (New York, 1964), 185-87. (Subsequently cited as *Notebooks, I.*)
14. Fig. 3—*ibid.;* Fig. 4—*The Nature of Nature—the Notebooks of Paul Klee, Vol. II,* ed. J. Spiller, tr. H. Norden (London, 1973), 45. (Subsequently cited as *Notebooks,* II).
15. The static-dynamic maxim appears continually throughout Klee's pedagogical writings. See *Notebooks, I* and *Notebooks, II,* passim. Cf. also Klee's 1923 oil *Farbsteigerung vom Statischen ins Dynamische (Progression of Color from the Static to the Dynamic),* private coll. Berlin. Reproduced in Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 395.
16. Klee's discussions of the "canon of color totality" appear in *Notebooks, I* on pp. 487-91. He says, "Every color starts ever so gently from its zero, that is its neighbor peak, rises to its own peak, and from there descends again slowly to its zero. . .It is immaterial whether I give this crescendo and decrescendo its naturalistic form or its exact form, or an artificial graduated form . . . But now something else comes in: The colors on this article do not sound in unison as the chain (of totality) might lead one to suppose, but in a kind of three part counterpoint. This combined diagram permits us to follow the three part movement. The voices come in successively as in a canon. At each of the three main points one voice reaches its climax, another voice softly begins, and a third dies away. One might call this new figure the canon of totality." On the crescendo and diminuendo of color, see also *Notebooks, II,* 313.
17. See *Notebooks, I,* 301 et passim. Klee speaks of the "psychic dynamism" of color and means of quantifying and controlling that dynamism.
18. In his foreword to the *Gradus* Fux pointedly dismissed those who detest "the very name of school and law like death itself"; cf. Mann, *Steps to Parnassus,* 17. In the lecture Klee delivered at the Jena *Kunstverein* in 1924 he said, "The chosen artists are those who dig down close to the secret source where the primal law feeds the forces of development"—*Notebooks, I,* 93. On Fux's concern with mathematics, see Liess, *Fuxiana,* 61-62.
19. *Steps to Parnassus,* 17. Klee too was deeply concerned with understanding the basic processes of composition—"how the work of art is actually made." In 1909 he said, "The fact of my not painting good pictures with a certain measure of regularity results precisely from my imperfect knowledge of what makes a good individual work. How well every person knows the difference, in the biographical sense, between Rubens and Rembrandt. But no one knows how a particular picture by one of these masters is constructed as a matter of mundane fact"—*Diaries,* 239(no. 861). It was precisely this deficiency that Klee hoped to rectify through his "contributions to fundamental principles and a theory of pictorial form"—*Notebooks, I,* 33. Hence, also his indefatigable experimentation with grounds and supports, pigment media and binders.
20. From the first version of "Exact Experiments in the Field of Art," reprinted in *Notebooks, I,* 69. The function-not-form idea recurs continually throughout Klee's pedagogical-theoretical writings.
21. Felix Klee, *op. cit.,* 33. In 1912, Klee wrote in his diary, "For these are primitive beginnings in art, such as one usually finds in ethnographic collections or at home in one's nursery. Do not laugh, reader! Children also have artistic ability, and there is wisdom in their having it! The more helpless they are, the more instructive are the examples they furnish us. . .All seriously, more seriously than all the public galleries, when it comes to reforming today's art."—*Diaries,* 226(no. 905). (This was transcribed from a review Klee wrote of the first *Blaue Reiter* exhibition, at the end of 1911.)
22. *Ibid.,* 146.
23. On Fux's eclecticism see H. Federhofer, "Zur Überlieferung der Musiktheorie in Österreich," *Die Musikforschung,* XI (1958), 164-279; "J.J. Fux als Musiktheoretiker, H. Albrecht in Memoriam (Kassel, 1962), 109; "Der *Gradus ad Parnassum* von J.J. Fux und seine Vorläufer in Österreich," *"Musikerziehung,* XI (1957-58), 31.
24. The title *Gradus ad Parnassum* was first used in 1687 for a dictionary of Latin versification. It was subsequently applied to treatises dealing with other arts.
25. This in one of the oldest, most frequently cited ideas in the Klee literature. It is mentioned, for example, in *Der Ararat,* special no. 2 (Munich, 1920), 1-25 (the catalogue for a Klee exhibition at Galerie Hans Goltz). Cf. Klee's supplementary notes on his diary, in Felix Klee, *op. cit.,* 5.
26. *Diaries,* 125(no. 429).
27. *Notebooks, I,* 151-152, *inter al.*
28. At the end of his 1921-22 Bauhaus lecture course (and presumably subsequent courses as well), Klee presented to his students a chart listing various fields of intellectual endeavor which he deemed relevant to painting. He intended that this chart, apart from a certain humor value, should assist his students in organizing their own approaches to art. Included were the fields of natural history, philology, literature, mathematics, various branches of philosophy, and so forth. Heading the list, as the all-embracing field of study, was music, and the comprehensive, all-embracing area of that field was titled by Klee *hohere Polyphonie.*

A particularly amusing feature of this chart appears under the category "Philosophie (als *Weltanschauung*)": under the sub-heading *Mensch,* Klee put Richard Wagner; under *Titan* he listed Bach and Beethoven; and under *Gott,* he inscribed the name Mozart. It seems that in Klee's view Bach was the consummate musical architect, Beethoven the consummate musical poet, and Mozart the ultimate synthesis—*Notebooks, I,* 458-59.

(Notwithstanding Klee's very real antipathy to the pathetic, *irdisch* character of Wagner's music, it should be noted that Klee's ideal of a great synthesis in art probably owes something, at least in a philosophical sense, to Wagner's vision of the *Gesamtkunstwerk.)*

Klee's esteem for the comprehensiveness of music again came forth at a colloquium during his tenure at Dusseldorf Academy (1931-33). A student had asked why the technical language of poetry could not also be applied to painting. Klee responded, "Gewiss, auch (die Metrik) kann beigezogen werden. Es stehen uns aber Ausdrücke aus dem Gebiete Musik naher, und da wir leider in der Malerei nicht so allgemeingültiges haben, entlehnen wir gerne. Die Musik umfasst ja: Die Harmonielehre, die Lehre von den Zusammenklängen, den Kontrapunkt, die Lehre von der Stimmführungskunst, die Formenlehre, die Disposition für den Aufbau und die Entwicklung musickalischer Gedanken"—quoted in Petra Petitpierre Aus

der Malklasse von Paul Klee (Bern, 1957), 54.

29. In his general course review, Klee spoke of his "striving for content," and said that "(Form) is the first consideration of our craft. But it would be a mistake to conclude that content is secondary."—*Notebooks, I,* 453, 457. On Klee's concern for absolute properties in art, see Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 205, et passim.

30. *Diaries,* 374(no. 1081).

31. *Notebooks, I,* 433. Cf. also Klee's discussions of the concept of structure in nature, and "natural motor organisms." *Ibid.,* 333-39.

32. In the remarkable lecture he delivered at the Jena *Kunstverein* in 1924, Klee said: ". . .Then I have tried every possible synthesis of the two types, combining and recombining, but always trying to cultivate the pure elements as far as possible. Sometimes I dream of a work of vast scope, which would encompass the whole realm of element, object, content and style. Doubtless that will remain a dream, but it is good occasionally to imagine this possibility, even though it remains vague at present.

"Creation cannot be rushed. A thing must grow, must mature, and if the time ever comes for that vast all-embracing work, so much the better."—*Ibid.,* 95.

33. *Ibid.,* 261, 519, et passim. A further important discussion of pictorial polyphony appears in the still unpublished sections of Klee's notes. See my forthcoming study, "Some Additional Notes on Klee's Theories of Polyphony."

34. *Ibid.,* 296. Klee's association of polyphony (and counterpoint) with life processes is further expressed in his polyphonic flora pictures (e.g., *Helical Flowers,* 1932—reproduced in *Notebooks, I,* 376, and his fugal florals (n. 56).

35. Paradoxically, because instrumental counterpoint, which to Bach and Mozart was the most serious element in music (see Alfred Einstein, *Mozart,* London, 1959, 236), has rarely been a significant feature of post-Renaissance French composition. Klee's idol Mozart acidly lampooned French musical taste, and he held the French school of composition in the lowest esteem—cf. *ibid.,* 227. French music has tended toward vocal conceptions and monodic, homophonic, or melody-and-accompaniment styles.

36. The paintings which Delaunay sent to the *Blaue Reiter* were *Saint-Sévering* (1909), *The City* (1910), *Eiffel Tower* (1910), and *The City* (1911). See G. Vriesen, M. Imdahl, *Robert Delaunay—Licht und Farbe* (Cologne, 1967). Kandinsky had seen some of Delaunay's work and heard of his ideas, had been impressed, and had asked him to participate in the exhibit.

37. *Die Alpen,* VI, 12 (Aug., 1912), 700; cf. n.12 on the Orphists' contrapuntal concepts.

38. *Der Sturm,* III, 144-45 (Jan., 1913), 25. Three versions of Delaunay's essay are printed in Vriesen, Imdahl, *op. cit.,* 1-3; the original in French, a literal German translation, and Klee's very free *Sturm* translation. A comparative reading is instructive, for Klee put a slightly greater emphasis on the musical concepts, and slightly less emphasis on Delaunay's ideas about visual perception.

39. Cf. Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 149, and Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Paul Klee* (Stuttgart, 1960), 28. Klee's principal critics and biographers have all noted the importance of Delaunay for Klee's development. See esp. G. di San Lazzaro, *Klee* (London, 1957), 67-75, and G. Henniger, "Paul Klee und Robert Delaunay," *Quadrum,* 3 (Brussels, 1957), 137-41. Grohmann, Giedion-Welcker, and Henniger draw comparisons between Klee's *Laughing Gothic* pictures of 1915 and Delaunay's *Saint-Séverin* pictures, and between Klee's *Abstract with Colored Circles and Bands* (1914.218) and Delaunay's *Circular Forms* (after 1912). Another obvious relationship exists between Klee's "City Pictures" of 1921 and Delaunay's "City" pictures of 1910-11, such as those he exhibited in the *Blaue Reiter* exhibit.

40. Vriesen, Imdahl, *op. cit.,* 38.

41. *Ibid.,* 42.

42. In later notes on his *Diaries,* Klee commented on the year 1909, "No local color. Anticipating the Delaunay principle"—Felix Klee, *op. cit.,* 14.

43. *Notebooks, II,* 273; Petitpierre, *op. cit.,* 19.

44. Klee first mentioned his use of a spraying technique in 1907—*Diaries,* 211 (no. 784); in 1908-10 he was trying to come to terms with tonality through exercises in step-glazing—*ibid.,* 231 (no. 840), 243 (nos. 871, 872).

In general, Klee's predilection for atmospheric, transparent color must have been related to his taste for the soft, color-suffused, misty light of slightly overcast weather—cf. *ibid.,* 375 (no. 1082). Cf. also the first version of Klee's "Creative Credo" (1917), in which he suggests that "misty" paint is extremely important as a spatial element in pictorial art—F. Klee, *op. cit.,* 151.

45. *Diaries,* 17 (no. 640).

46. *Ibid.,* 374 (no. 1081). This statement is perhaps somewhat confusing. Klee firmly believed that painting, like music, is a temporal art. That temporality is the subject of much of his writing—e.g., in his "Creative Credo," section IV-F. Klee, *op. cit.,* 153ff. He means in this statement on polyphony that painting, in his ideal vision, has a better potential for dealing with and overcoming its temporality, without denying it.

47. Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 71.

48. On the evolution of this crucial concept from Newton and Goethe to the present day, see N.L. Prak's important study "Persistent Schemes: The Quest for a Neutral Form," *Art International,* XIV, 7 (Sept., 1970), 74-79.

49. *Diaries,* 227 (no. 827).

50. Cf. Klee's extensive discussion of color as a "world of content" in his Jena lecture of 1924—*Notebooks, I,* 91.

51. For Klee's thinking on the subject of dissonance and active vs. inactive color harmonies, see Petitpierre, *op. cit.,* 30, *Notebooks, I,* 515, 522, *Diaries,* 198 (no. 844), and *passim* in Klee's writings.

52. Color reproduction in Vriesen, Imdahl, *op. cit.,* 15. Vriesen and Imdahl extensively discuss the influence of Neo-Impressionism on Delaunay's thinking.

53. Cf. Uta Laxner's fundamental study *Stilanalytische Untersuchungen zu den Aquarellen der Tunisreise 1914: Macke, Klee, Moillet* (Ph.D. dissertation, Bonn, 1967).

54. *Diaries,* 187(no. 926f).

55. The 1916 pictures, nos. 22-26 in the Klee catalogue, are settings of Chinese poems, in German translation.

56. This technique is somewhat reminiscent of Duchamp's *Tu m'* of 1918. Grohmann discusses the "fugal" works in detail—*op. cit.,* 221-22.

57. I.e., the rationalization of color has not been possible in painting, because painters have never agreed upon a system of articulation (arbitrary divisions) in the color continuum such as composers had in the sound continuum, in the form of notation, tempered tuning, major-minor system, etc. In his *Notebooks, II (The Nature of Nature),* Klee touched upon this fascinating topic: "In music, accordingly, the quarter-tone scale or the "chromatic" half-tone scale would be closer to natural differences in pitch than the more artificial major and minor scales. If we had but time to deal with this aspect at greater length, this casual aspect might afford special insight into the sphere of musical style."—p. 377. Klee did not share in the enthusiasm of Munich art circles for the new music—cf. the articles on "Die freie Musik" by N. Kulbin and "Über die Anarchie in der Musik" by T. v. Hartmann, in Kandinsky and Marc's *Der Blaue Reiter* of 1912—new edition, ed. K. Lankheit (Munich, 1965). Kulbin offers an extensive appreciation of the quarter-tone and half-tone scales. On the other side of the issue, cf. Klee's grotesquely satirical 1909 watercolor-drawing *The Pianist in Distress, Caricature on Modern Music.*

Apropros Klee's search for basic structural units and limits, cf. also his assertion that the possibilities of color extend "from the tiniest single note to the grandest polyphony of colors"—F. Klee, *op. cit.,* 175. In 1910 he theorized "Rational: the shadow image; irrational: the color image. Perhaps the two cannot be melted into agreement, but it should at least be tried."—*Diaries,* 245 (no. 879).

58. The color rectangle theme of course has antecedents in ancient mosaics and decorative wall painting, such as may be seen at Pompeii, which Klee had visited in 1902. The Pompeiian paintings moved him extremely—*Diaries,* 99-101 (nos. 392-95). Unlike other twentieth-century practitioners of color rectangle painting, Klee's avowed goal was to avoid simple decoration. Grohmann discusses the "magic-squares" at length—*op. cit.,* 213-21.

59. Cf. H. Otte, "Alte Klänge in neuen Komponisten," *Melos: Zeitschrift fur Neue Musik,* 9 (Sept., 1966), 268.

60. *Diaries,* 253(No. 885).

61. *Notebooks, I,* 191.

62. *Ibid.,* 303-05.

63. Klee's development of the "dividual-individual synthesis" occupied a huge portion of his lecture course. Cf. *Notebooks, I,* 217-341.

64. *Diaries,* 181 (no. 645-49).

65. Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 32.

66. Cf. *Diaries,* 215 (no. 793), 216 (no. 798), 231 (no. 840), 243-45 (nos. 871-79). We have recently seen computers reduce images in continuous light-dark modeling to rectangle compositions in a few, discrete value quanta—hence, checkerboard portraits and still lifes.

67. Cf. *Diaries,* 175-76 (nos. 632-33).

68. *Notebooks, I,* 307.

69. In his discussion of the "magic squares" of 1923, Grohmann suggests a connection with the rationalistic approach of Schoenberg's Twelve-Tone System, which was introduced in that same year—*op. cit.,* 216.

70. For a survey of some of Klee's polyphonic styles between 1920 and 1932, see Christian Gellhaar, *Paul Klee und das Bauhaus* (Cologne, 1972), 129-63.

71. From *Notebooks I,* 261. Additional discussions of this illustration appear in the still unpublished sections of Klee's notebooks.

72. Klee's own term. Used, for example, in a letter of March, 1932, quoted in Felix Klee, *op. cit.,* 68.

73. Cf. *Notebooks, I,* 433. Delaunay had used groups of color dots in his "City" pictures to gain coloristic and spatial effects (as had Gris also, by 1915). However, he worked the small dot planes into the broken space, rather than using them as a rationalizing device.

74. In "the use of all the formal elements, including color, we must avoid the slightest trace of unclarity"—*ibid.,* 95, also 103 et passim. Cf. Kandinsky's 1926 Bauhaus book *Point to Line and Plane.* The point-line-plane notion derives from Helmholtz—see M. Teuber, *Paul Klee; The Bauhaus Years* (Des Moines, 1973), 9.

75. *Ibid.,* 49.

76. In the "Jupiter" symphony ("the highest attainment in art" to Klee), Mozart recapitulated, so to speak, his recapitulation of polyphonic practice, and he achieved "the complete fusion of the "galant" and 'learned' styles"—Einstein, *op. cit.,* 234-36. In the remarkable coda of the last movement, Mozart constructed an incredibly deep polyphonic texture out of its five principle themes. This movement defined the ultimate limits of monumentality in polyphonic music. Klee called it "the summit of all daring. [It] is decisive for all subsequent musical history"—Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 74.

77. Quote from Leopold Mizler, J.S. Bach's pupil and the translator of the *Gradus ad Parnassum* into German—H. Federhofer, "*Der Gradus ad Parnassum* von J.J. Fux and seine Vorläufer in Österreich," 32.

78. *Polyphony* and *Ad Parnassum* are numbered 1932.273 and 1923.274, respectively, in Klee's chronological oeuvre catalogue, which is conserved at the Klee Foundation in Bern.

79. Reproductions and casual observation of the painting give the distinct impression that Klee used a good deal of yellow. This is not, in fact, the case: Klee used no yellow here at all. The very yellow greens in the ground, filtered through the overall blue tonality, give this deceptive effect.

80. *Notebooks, I,* 305.

81. *Diaries,* 232 (no. 842), 244 (no. 875).

82. The "conductor's baton stroke in two-part time" is one of the illustrations that Klee used in his classroom discussions of "cultural rhythms"—*Notebooks, I,* 274.

83. *Ibid.,* 300, 303. On p. 325 is Klee's discussion of a third type of linear relationship, the "melodic" (solo voice and accompaniment).

84. "It is easier to bring complex processes to life if one uses composite components. Basic possibilities; forms composed of two or more elements. Displacement, mirroring, rotation with motifs of composite construction."—*ibid.,* 307. These ideas are basic principles of contrapuntal composition, thematic variation, and imitation. In the *Gradus ad Parnassum* Fux extensively discussed the principles of direct, contrary, and oblique motion in contrapuntal voicing—*The Study of Counterpoint,* 21ff. In *Der Niesen* (Fig. 8), Klee established contrary contrapuntal motion by "mirroring" the mountain shape in the color patches below. This has been noted by H. Jaffe, *Paul Klee* (Lucerne, 1971), 17. Klee used a similar "mirroring" technique in *Ad Parnassum,* for the sloping mass of dark value colors at lower right in the ground theme combine with a reverse-sloping mass of reds and oranges in the dot-screen (at the lower left) to create a color "valley" that is a close inversion of the "mountain."

85. "Amazing what happens when everything is cut off . . . this produces something remarkable in the way of expression. A tacit extension fo the pictorial space, so that only a part of the whole is realized . . . This provides a kind of liberation in brackets."—*Notebooks,* I, 294.

86. Cf. pp. 21-22.

87. *Diaries,* 374 (no. 1081); Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 371.

88. In a letter to his wife of March 11, 1932, Klee wrote, "At the moment I'm less concerned with completing pictures than with trying out new grounds. That has brought me back to glazes. Probably I shall tie that up with so-called pointillism."—Felix Klee, *op. cit.,* 68. *Spring Picture* is reproduced in Geelhaar, *op. cit.,* 144.

89. Grohmann, *op. cit.,* 374.

90. Some of the distinct similarities between *Ad Parnassum* and *Der Niesen* have been discussed by Jaffe, *op. cit.,* 30.

91. *Ad Parnassum* is numbered 274 out of the 344 works in all media that Klee executed in 1932 (according to his chronological oeuvre catalogue).

92. Several of Klee's letters, beginning around 1930, evince his concern about the political situation. See Felix Klee, *op. cit.,* 66-69.

93. *Ad Parnassum* has been briefly discussed as a landscape by both Grohmann, *Der Maler Paul Klee* (Cologne 1966), 122, and Thomas Messer, *Paul Klee at the Guggenheim Museum: A Post Scriptum* (New York, 1968), 20. Klee's use of a complex pun is especially significant because of his acute consciousness (as he lamented in his Jena lecture) of the impossibility of achieving the "simultaneity of several independent themes" in language. Verbal language is a faulty instrument in this respect, for we lack the means to discuss synthetically a multi-dimensional phenomena—cf. F. Klee, *op. cit.,* 170. Though the pun is not an inherently serious form, it does represent a possibility for presenting independent ideas simultaneously in language (with harmonious effect, rather than confusion). This, I believe, accounts for Klee's fascination with puns, apart from their humorous possibilities. Klee's practices in titling his works have been discussed in C. Kroll, *Die Bildtitel Paul Klees* (Dissertation, Bonn, 1968), which unfortunately does not consider *Ad Parnassum,* where Klee succeeded in the difficult task of creating a purely serious, affirmative pun, with no element of satire or irony.

ALL ROADS LEAD (RELUCTANTLY) TO BERN: STYLE AND SOURCE IN PAUL KLEE'S EARLY "SOUR" PRINTS

ALESSANDRA COMINI

A young artist seeking acquittal from the student years and a year in Rome, Klee exorcised the classical imago through the strident anti-classicism of the prints done on his return to Bern.

Fig. 1. Bruno di Bello, Paul Klee, 1970. *Oil on canvas.*

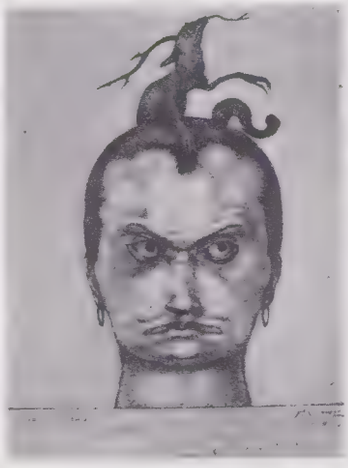


Fig. 2. Paul Klee, Threatening Head, 1905. *Etching, 16-3/8 x 12½".*

Fig. 3. Photograph of Paul Klee, 1912.

for Megan, lover of Morgenstern

Ein kleines Kleeblatt"—a small clover-leaf if found growing in a meadow outside Bern, but a mischievous signature and pun if discovered incised on an early engraving by Paul Klee—"a small Klee print." During the years 1903-1905, Klee, according to his own catalogue of works,[1] executed the group of 15 prints commonly known as the series of grotesque or satirical etchings. In his diary entries[2] Klee referred to their style as "severe" and "sour." Representative of this group is the well known, amusing *Two Men Meet, Each Supposing the Other to be of Higher Rank* of 1903. The austere aspect of this labored but bare composition sets it apart from the florid eruptions of the contemporary Art Nouveau style whose perfumed aroma all Europe was still contentedly sniffing. But the earnest maliciousness of content which characterizes this and the other satirical works, to which Klee referred as "tragicomic," stands apart not only from the major art movements of the period but from the artist's later work as well. Klee never returned to their ferocious realism or biting intensity of content. Nevertheless, the relation of these prints to Klee's artistic development is important. Their role may be considered as that of a catharsis; Klee himself frequently referred to the necessity of enduring and following through this severe style. Many diary entries refer directly to the tedious experimentation, slow progress, and reversals which accompanied the creation of these prints, the sole product of three years' work.

The sour prints were executed in the provincial isolation of the home of Klee's parents in Bern after a long period of formal art study which had comprised three years in Munich (October 1898 to autumn 1900, private class with Knirr; autumn 1900, with Franz Stuck at the Academy) and eleven months of residence and travel in Italy (July 1901 to May 1902). During and after the Bern period Klee referred to "the great humiliation of the apprenticeship in Rome," and his subsequent reaction through caricature.

If we think of the satirical etchings as Klee's "retaliation" against a classical heritage that both awed and alienated him, we have, I think, a useful insight into the sardonic, half-desperate, half-heroic mood in which the twenty-two-year-old artist found himself after returning to the depressingly familiar bourgeois Bern of his childhood:

> My Italian trip now lies a month behind me. A strict review of my situation as a creative artist doesn't yield very encouraging results. I don't know why, but I continue nonetheless to be hopeful. Perhaps from the realization that at the root of my devastating self-criticism there is, after all, some spiritual development.[3]

Klee's ambition to become somebody, to "master life," and also to develop as a valid artist was made all the more urgent by the imminent formal announcement of his secret engagement to the pianist Lily Stumpf. "The feeling of responsibility toward my fiancée and parents and unsuccessful attempts to paint often brew a kind of suicidal mood."[4] But the Italian experience haunted him as well. He needed time to absorb it. "What a change within me. I have seen a piece of living history. The Forum and the Vatican spoke to me. Humanism jumps at my throat. . . . I must go along with it, if only for a little way. Farewell, elves, moon fairy, star dust."[5] And yet when he put pencil to paper, tender humanism hardened into bitter satire. Instantly he scolded himself: "Satire must not be a kind of superfluous ill will, but ill will from a higher point of view. Ridiculous man, divine God. Or else, hatred against the bogged-down vileness of average man as against the possible heights that humanity might attain."[6] How could he, with the "poet's" soul, rise to the lofty heights of humanism from the paved sidewalks of philistine Bern? "Sunday afternoons in Bern are so depressing. . .these poor people are so ugly for the most part that they are hateful rather than pitiable. . .And this half-peasant, half-smalltown lack of taste."[7] Desperately Klee sought consolation in music, and as a violinist with the Bern symphony orchestra he made frequent out-of-town concert trips. But each time the return to Bern was painful. The prestige of having been a student of Stuck ("which would have been enough to impress most people") and the Italian Wanderjahr weighed upon him accusingly. He set himself a rigorous schedule: "I'm going to do everything that I still haven't done. I'm going to study anatomy with the medical students. I'm going to draw nudes, along with the provincial painters, from a horrible model dragged in from the hills."[8] But nothing seemed to help except the passage of time. He recognized the complex dualisms thrashing inside him and concluded: "I am my own style."[9] And again, "The thought of having to live in an epigonic age is almost unbearable. In Italy I was almost helplessly under the sway of this thought. Now I try to ignore all this in practice and to build myself modestly, like a self-taught man, without looking left or right."[10]

This then was Klee's self-imposed, diary-documented program for the next three years in Bern: to build modestly, like a self-taught man, without looking left or right. But was he truly able to operate—tabula rasa—as an *Autodidakt,* noting nothing peripherally, reflecting no styles except himself? The answer is, of course, no. But there is a touch of perverse logic in this easily expressed conclusion, for the style and sources of Klee's sour prints are perceived only through recognition of a reverse process: oblique rejection rather than overt appropriation. What Klee was to sum up (June 1906) as the "so to speak, classical style" of his severe etchings is in fact a strident *anti-classicism.* And what he was chattily to identify in his diary entries as the

specific inspiration or theme for his pictures was nevertheless intellectually indebted to his Munich and Italian experiences.

One hundred and fifteen years earlier, Goethe had made the Italian journey with a copy of Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity* in his hand. Klee's *vade mecum* was the work of a fellow Swiss, Jakob Burckhardt's *Cicerone* (1855). Following Klee's diary, cognizant and conscious as it was of Goethe's *Italian Journey,* we can watch the unfolding of yet another Nordic soul under Italian sunshine, and observe the multiple blooming nourished by the land "wo die Zitronen blühn." Diary entries covering the previous years of study in the Munich of 1898-1901 reveal a Klee impatient with the garish neo-classicism of Stuck ("he understands nothing about the realm of color") and an adventurer on the track not of art but of women, in order to solve the "sexual mystery." ("A little 'Leporello catalogue' of all the sweethearts whom I didn't possess provides an ironical reminder of the great sexual question."[11]) The *Kammermusik* intimacy of this unabashed eroticism, solicitously noted down by our conscientious young chronicler, admits a throbbing leitmotiv to the dark tonalities of Klee's sour prints. Hellas and Eros then are the wraiths that haunt or flee from the stated themes and style of Klee's satirical Opus One.

The following prints comprise the "Ten Inventions" from Opus One which Klee exhibited for the first time in the Munich *Sezession* of 1906[12]:

1. *Woman and Beast,* 1903 (Fig. 4)
2. *Virgin in a Tree,* 1903 (Fig. 10)
3. *Woman Sowing Weeds,* 1903 (Fig. 15)
4. *Comedian* (3 versions), 1903-04 (Figs. 17, 18, and 19)
5. *Two Men Meet, Each Supposing the Other to be of Higher Rank,* 1903 (Fig. 26)
6. *Crown Mania (The Monarchist),* 1904 (Fig. 28)
7. *Perseus, The Triumph of Wit over Misfortune,* 1904 (Fig. 20)
8. *Hero with a Wing,* 1905 (Fig. 30)
9. *Aged Phoenix,* 1905 (Fig. 32)
10. *Threatening Head,* 1905 (Fig. 2)

All of the prints deal with human or humanlike creatures (*Aged Phoenix*). Of these, seven are full figures and five are heads. The ratio of male figures is greater than that of female figures although the series begins with three full-length female images (*Woman and Beast, Virgin in a Tree,* and *Woman Sowing Weeds*). Male heads follow in the three versions of the *Comedian, Perseus* (which includes a female head to the right), and *Threatening Head,* and male figures occupy the remaining full-length compositions (*Two Men, Crown Mania, Hero with a Wing,* and *Aged Phoenix*).

A labored gothicism of form produces the anti-classical impression given by these prints in the "so to speak, clasical style." Klee's description "classical" refers more aptly to the nudity or near-nudity of his figures—a veritable ancient sculpture gallery on paper—and to the frozen theater mask or classical coin profile aspect of the portrait heads. An aggressive decipherability of silhouette is characteristic of all the prints, whether they are placed against a white or a black background. The main contours are composed of thin continuous lines which are frequently "fuzzed" by a meticulous short crosshatching. Interior modeling is achieved by the repetition of small strokes, flicks, and dots which are sometimes quite dense (*Hero with a Wing, Perseus*) and sometimes quite sparse *(Two Men, Aged Phoenix).* In the earlier prints this modeling emphasizes anatomy with a grotesque and often skeletal insistence *(Woman and Beast, Virgin in a Tree, Woman Sowing Weeds, Comedian III);* in the later prints dealing with male figures, the modeling assumes an arbitrary decorativeness or thick over-all pattern which suggest an angular yet spineless or rubbery character *(Two Men, Crown Mania)* and at times a sort of wooden inarticulateness *(Hero with a Wing).* "For I have discovered a very small, undisputed, personal possession: a particular sort of three-dimensional representation on the flat surface."[13]

The surface tension initiated by Klee's forcing the third dimension onto his flat plane vies with the plasticity of subject matter and contributes to the sense of strain and "rawness" experienced visually in these prints. This effect is frequently enhanced by the contrast of bare, non-specified areas of space or void surrounding the figures and heads. The figures, their glances, and their gestures are fixed, like insects secured by pins, and allegorical indications of atrophy are occasionaly introduced in which the figure parallels or merges with its setting (*Woman and Beast, Virgin in a Tree, Hero with a Wing*). The organic empathy exhibited between figure and environment in these prints corresponds with Klee's aim at that time: "Spiritualization of landscape, mingling of its psyche with human sensibility."[14]

Klee was now equipped with a solid knowledge of the human figure, derived from his life-drawing classes and anatomical studies. Yet it was the path of fantastic realism which Klee chose to exploit in his sour prints, turning his mastery of anatomy into a weird spectacle of reduction or overstatement.

The deliberate anti-classicism of these prints is not limited to their style. It is also discernible thematically if we observe Klee's reverse process of oblique rejection. About his first print

Fig. 5. After Praxiteles, Cnidian Venus (Roman marble copy). *Courtesy Vatican Museum.*

Fig. 4. Paul Klee, Woman and Beast, 1903. *Etching.*

Fig. 6. Vignette from Jugend, 1904, No. 50, p. 1019.

Fig. 7. Lucas Cranach, Eve (from Adam and Eve), 1528. *Oil on canvas. Courtesy Uffizi.*

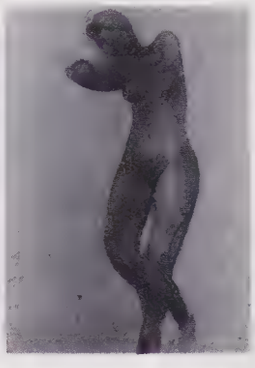


Fig. 8. Auguste Rodin, Study of a Nude. *Watercolor on paper. Courtesy Bourdelle Museum. Paris.*

Fig. 9. Ferdinand Hodler, Admiration, 1903. *Oil on canvas. Formerly Private Collection. Vienna.*

Woman and Beast (Fig. 4) Klee wrote: "The beast in man pursues the woman, who is not entirely insensible to it. Affinities of the lady with the bestial. Unveiling a bit of the feminine psyche. Recognition of a truth one likes to mask . . ."[15] Both protagonists in *Woman and Beast* display the stylistic attenuation and agitated surface-flecking noted above. The moment, as indicated by the position of the lady's right hand and Klee's description, is lewd. Equally pervasive, however, is an element of burlesque. It is impossible to disregard Klee's humorous metamorphosis of the absent-minded, drapery-clutching Venuses populating classical art. With the aid of Klee's Italian diary we may dare to suggest a specific prototype: the *Cnidian Venus* after Praxiteles (Fig. 5). "Ancient sculpture at the Vatican. I find myself more mature in my growing admiration for the Apollo Belvedere. . . New understanding for the Cnidian Venus. Here, in agreement with Burckhardt."[16] The restoration of the arms in the Vatican example is sardonically altered by Klee in his print, resulting in further drapery slippage. A variety of other images can be said to have intervened and contributed, cumulatively, to Klee's modern venereal achetype. The theme itself—woman and beast—appeared in various crude vignettes (Fig. 6) in the pages of the lively Munich periodical *Jugend,* to which, at Stuck's urging, Klee had submitted drawings (which

Fig. 10. Paul Klee, Virgin in a Tree, 1903. *Etching, 9¼ x 11¾".*

Fig. 11. Hans Baldung Grien, Three Witches, 1514. *Courtesy Albertina, Vienna.*

Fig. 12. Giovanni Segantini, The Evil Mothers, 1894. *Oil on canvas. Courtesy Neue Museum in der Stalburg, Vienna.*

Fig. 13. Paul Klee, Virgin in a tree, detail.

Fig. 14. Martin Schongauer, Noli Me Tangere, c. 1485. *Engraving.*

were rejected). The style transformation from classical harmony to anti-classical "ugliness" ("Dissertations could be written about the significance of the 'ugliness' of my figures."[17]) attests to multiple sources. In the Uffizi Klee had keenly analyzed not only Botticelli but "also considerably improved my opinion of Lucas Cranach by looking at his *'Eve'* (Fig. 7), particularly by observing the creative treatment of the legs."[18] Before leaving Florence he made a return visit to the Uffizi: "This time looked at the Germans. Dürer well represented; Holbein less well. But Lucas Cranach [*Adam and Eve*] shows so much the better for it. . ."[19] The same Klee who could appreciate the contrived arcs of Cranach ascribed an unusual quality to a living French artist (Fig. 8) he saw on display back in Rome: "Rodin's caricatures of nudes! Caricatures! A genre unknown before him. The greatest I have seen were among them; a stupendously gifted man. Contours are drawn with a few lines of the pencil, a brush filled with watercolor contributes the flesh tone . . . that is all and the effect is simply monumental."[20] In his multifold receptivity Klee was a creative sieve through which classical, gothic, and modern influences filtered: the sediment was the hard-edged pastiche of his sour prints—a mixture of free caricature and meticulous craft.

The boldness with which Klee's "architectonic" figures stand out against their white or black backgrounds also owes an emphatic debt to the poster-like clarity that distinguishes the grave Symbolist statements of the most famous living Swiss artist of the day, Ferdinand Hodler (Fig. 9). Klee referred somewhat scornfully to his colleagues' slavish imitations of Hodler at the Kornhaus where he had begun attending an evening class in drawing from the nude. ("All 'Hodlerize' more or less. The models are strictly *à la* hills."[21]) But even though he was not prepared to Hodlerize himself, he did think enough of the master to visit the State Museum in Zürich "mainly in order to see the original mural *The Battle of Marignano* by Hodler,"[22] and on a short trip to Munich (early June 1903) he noted that the Hodler works on exhibition at the *Sezession* "left a lasting impression."[23] Hodler's eurythmic paralleling of people and nature and his impressive gestural repertoire had gripped a whole generation of painters (Kokoschka and Schiele, among the Expressionists), and the same monumentality Klee had recognized in the Rodin watercolor nudes was to be found on a more programmatic scale in Hodler. The tension injected by Klee into his satirical prints had an inescapable precedent in the spiritual "hyper-intensity" of Hodler's "figures which look as if they can't find peace."[24]

The reclining pose and angular hip of *Virgin in a Tree* (Fig. 10) has been compared to Pisanello's *Allegory of Luxury* drawing in the Albertina.[25] Visual parallels do indeed exist, and the abandoned posture of the figure in both works expresses a mutual spirit. Pisanello's interpretation of the antique Nereid provided a callipygian Gothic denial of a classic model while actually copying it. Although the allusion to antique sources is more general in *Virgin in a Tree* than in *Woman and Beast,* Klee too establishes and interprets the traditional image of a reclining nude. His anti-classicism is thus all the more cogent because he invokes that which is to be rejected or transformed. The sagging breasts and crotchety mien of Klee's treed virgin exert little sensual charm. In the artist's words: "The lady wants to be something special through virginity, but doesn't cut an attractive figure."[26] Furthermore, the figure is symbolically and organically related to the rotting tree upon which she perches. The emphasis upon repellent decay rather than eroticism in the distended breasts recalls not Italian art, but a tradition closer at hand—the fantastic "witch" pictures that became popular in early sixteenth-century German art and which were drawn with such relish by Bern's own Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, and by the German Hans Baldung Grien (Fig. 11). Although it is not incorrect to project an equally Northern heritage for the gnarled tree, an entry from Klee's diary during his sojourn in Rome proves in-

teresting in respect to the genesis of this print. He wrote:

> I drew a few queerly shaped tree trunks in the park of the Villa Borghese. The linear principles here are similar to those of the human body, only more tightly related. What I have thus learned I at once put to use in my compositions.[27]

Two further comments of Klee, written right after the completion of this etching, must be quoted here:

> First I etched and engraved the contours of the tree. Then, the modeling of the tree and the contours of the body, then the modeling of the body and of the pair of birds.[28]
>
> Louis Moilliet is beginning to understand me. . . . He saw how I blocked out the nude and how much I made use of it in my drawing. He has seen my few engravings, and knows in what an unusual way they are connected with the life studies.[29]

These three statements indicate the seriousness of Klee's equation of the human body with a tree form and account for the fascinating passages of parallel linear motifs and duplicate humpings of form in the human and aboreal limbs. This earnestness of intellectual conception is lacking in contemporary examples of similar motifs: Stuck's 1891 *Sleeping Faun* (reproduced that year in *Die graphischen Künste,* p. 23), for instance, is by comparison robust and uncomplicated, with no phenomenon which had affected the work of older artists such as Böcklin and Klinger as well as the content of the satirical magazines *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus.* The bitterness of Klee's reaction to the provincialism of Bern made him receptive to this general mood, as evidenced by his own explanation of *Virgin in a Tree* as a "critique of bourgeois society."[31] His sarcastic portrayal of the parsimonious exhibitionist at whom even the bony lovebirds look askance drives home one more ironical point: she can't be a day under thirty (Fig. 13).

Although *Virgin in a Tree* is anti-classical in the formal sense previously discussed in connection with *Woman and Beast,* it achieves an extraordinary internal stylistic unity which is based on the bold retention of the nude as a three-dimensional element projected onto a flat surface. The successful integration of form and style in this print may be measured against the work of another printmaker whose precision of form Klee's work recalls. Martin Schongauer's late engraving *Noli Me Tangere* (Fig. 14) indicates the paradox of an artist who has tried to wed his sympathetically-felt observation of nature to a tradition of highly developed artificial forms (the tree as opposed to the drapery patterns). Klee's print, although consciously "in the manner of the old woodcut,"[32] affords no such inconsistency but has on a formal as well as thematic level effectively mingled

Fig. 15. Paul Klee, Woman Sowing Weeds, 1903. *Etching.*

Fig. 16. After Polykleitos, Capitoline Amazon. *Courtesy Capitoline Museum, Rome.*

Fig. 17. Paul Klee, Comedian (I), 1903-04. *Etching.*

Fig. 21. Greek Archaic Coin from Naxos, c. 530 B.C.

Fig. 18. Paul Klee, Comedian (II), 1903-04. *Etching.*

Fig. 19. Paul Klee, Comedian (III), 1903-04. *Etching.*

thought of analogy between the faun and his convenient tree-limb bed, and examples in the pages of *Jugend* are overly sentimental or coy.[30]

The closest parallel to *Virgin in a Tree* is, of course, Giovanni Segantini's wierd and wildly original *The Evil Mothers* of 1894 (Fig. 12). Segantini, the strange mountain moralizer from South Tyrol whose death in 1899 inspired a flurry of admiring articles and monographs, had addressed a grim subject in his picture: infanticide. Set against a vast Alpine expanse of snow-capped ridges, the writhing figure of a woman is seen impaled upon a lone tree (Segantini's awesome punishment for infanticide). As the evil mother literally and allegorically becomes a withered branch, the life she has denied expires at her breast. Segantini's subject is irresponsible self-gratification; Klee's theme is denial of sensuality. Both are morality pieces—the country rustic's version, deadly serious; the urbanite's rendition, tongue in cheek. What Klee's terse print also shares with Segantini is that fin-de-siècle mood of the *sinister,* a quality present in the work of many artists at this time, including Munch, Rops, Ensor, Beardsley, and Kubin. None of these is named in Klee's diary during 1903 (although they all are during the next few years) and indeed it is not necessary to establish such a direct connection, because the macabre aspect of Symbolism was a general the "psyche" of nature with "human sensibility." The gothicizing aspect of the satirical series thus actually differs in stylistic intention from true Gothic work.

Consideration of the sources for *Virgin in a Tree* indicates the following elements: specific personal theme (lampooning Swiss society) with erotic content, ironic allegory, formal artistic "problems," sympathy with the morbid aspects of early sixteenth-century German art and current Symbolism, conscious gothicizing, and a creative anti-classical reaction and style. These factors, with a decreasing emphasis on the prickly subject of sexuality, apply in varying combination and degree to the remaining sour prints.

Klee considered *Woman Sowing Weeds* (Fig. 15) "a little scherzo,"[33] and indeed the ridiculous traffic policeman-like gesture of the arms, though accounted for thematically, is humorously reminiscent of the "three minute" drawings from life posed as problem exercises in Stuck's classes. The skeleton-like projection of the exaggerated pelvis actually recalls one of the early objects of study in Stuck's classes.[34] The gesticulating figure has the same type of sagging breasts and angular, attenuated extremities as *Virgin in a Tree,* and through the senseless waste of her sowing, an allegorical kinship with the theme of the Foolish Virgin is suggested. Just as

the theme of *Woman Sowing Weeds* can be linked to the sterility caricatured by Klee in *Virgin in a Tree,* so the frozen action of the standing figure can be associated with classical prototypes of gesticulating female figures such as the so-called Capitoline Amazon after Polykleitos in the Capitoline Museum (Fig. 16). Klee's appreciation of ancient art had been nourished not only at the Capitoline Museum[35] but also at the National Museum in Diocletian's Thermae, where "the statues are not treated like propped-up bowling pins."[36] Noting that his "feeling for bronzes" was growing, he sought out further classical collections, visiting the Vatican where, as we have seen, he admired the Cnidian Venus (but could not work up the same enthusiasm for the Laocoön group), and acquired his own portable gallery of classical sculpture: "I own a series of the most beautiful photos of ancient statuary . . . I never tire of spreading them out before me."[37] His devotion was genuine: on the day of his departure from Rome he "paid a farewell visit to my friends among the ancient works of sculpture and now believe I can leave Rome with a clear conscience."[38] The protagonists of his sour prints, in spite of their gothicized refutation of classical proportions, are stamped with memories of the world of antiquity with which the artist fell in love while in Italy.

The three versions of the *Comedian* (Figs. 17, 18, and 19) may be contrasted to the two heads in the single print *Perseus, The Triumph of Wit over Misfortune* (Fig. 20) in that the former deal with theater masks and the latter with fantasy physiognomies. Klee refers to the *Perseus* as "a more refined sequel to the *Comedian.*"[39] In all three versions of *Comedian,* the mask ("art") and the man ("a grave, moral head") are presented in profile. While the features of the man remain basically unchanged, the mask, which at first recalls Archaic Greek coins (Fig. 21), goes through two transformations, each more horrific than the one before. The playful caricature of the first two masks—one with a long pointed nose, clamped lips, and a thin goatee, the other with bared fangs and a bulging eyeball—becomes serious grotesquerie in the final version. Here the mask's cranium, which previously had extended over both heads, has been excised. A large pointed ear appears, the nostrils are reduced to snail-like coils, and a great beard falls from below thick, smiling lips. The position of the single visible eye in each protagonist triggers a different dialogue in each print. In the final version the heads fill the picture and are set against a black background which enhances the admirable curving rhythms of the two interlocked forms, with motifs such as the beard and plume corresponding to the concave-convex activation of the total silhouette. The meticulous stippling technique of the etching needle reaches an intensity in this print which is comparable to that in the *Perseus.*[40] The earring which has been added to the man in the last version will appear again in Klee's final print of the series, *Threatening Head.* Klee recorded that his *Comedian* mask group was begun while reading the comedies of Aristophanes, and the meaning of at least one of the little emblems included in the second version of *Comedian* (a sword,[41] Klee's "signature" three-leaf clover, a snake, and a frog) can therefore be suggested: the frog is perhaps a playful reference to Aristophanes' play *The Frogs.* It is doubtful whether at this early date the masks reflect Klee's later study of theater masks. In 1905 the artist wrote his own analysis of the group: "One more thing may be said about 'The Comedian': the mask represents art, and behind it hides the man. The lines of the mask are roads to the analysis of the work of art. The duality of the world of art and that of man is organic . . ."[42]

Perseus, The Triumph of Wit over Misfortune (Fig. 20) was executed after Klee's study of Beardsley, Blake, and Goya in the Munich print room, which he visited several times during his October 1904 visit to the city. Concerning this experience and the "plot" of his latest print he wrote:

> The longish interruption did no harm to my work. At times I still thought a little about Blake. But then, in God's name, I was completely myself again! I engraved the final version of 'Woman and Beast,' 'The Monarchist,' *[Crown Mania]* and the new 'Perseus.' . . . This new Perseus has dealt the sad dull monster Misfortune the death blow by cutting off its head. This action is reflected by the physiognomy of the man whose face functions as a mirror of the scene. The underlying marks of pain become mixed with laughter, which finally retains the upper hand. Viewed from one angle, unmixed suffering is carried *ad absurdum* in the Gorgon's head added on the side. The expression is stupid, rather, the head robbed of its nobility and of its crown of snakes except for some ridiculous vestiges. Wit has triumphed over Misfortune (a more refined sequel to the 'Comedian').[43]

Certainly there is no trace of Blake's flowing modeling in Klee's new *Perseus.* Instead, the physiognomic potential in the isolation of small areas (already suggested in the final *Comedian*) is exploited without the foil of elegant silhouette. The flat snub-nosed Gorgon's head may have been suggested by Rodin's bust *The Man with the Broken Nose* of 1864—Lily had given Klee a book on Rodin a few months previously—but more probably it is a free invention following upon the nose transformations already invented in the *Comedian* prints. The deliberate lack of

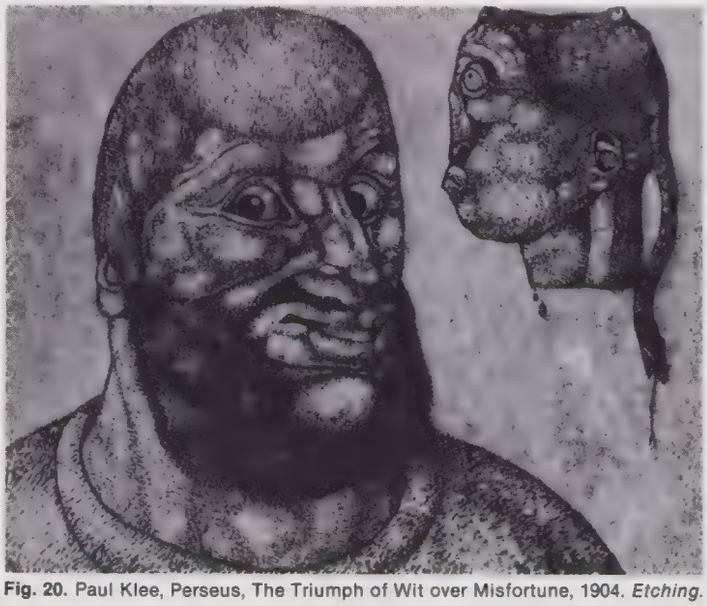


Fig. 20. Paul Klee, Perseus, The Triumph of Wit over Misfortune, 1904. *Etching.*

◄ **Fig. 22** Franz Stuck, Lucifer, 1890. *Oil on canvas. Courtesy National Art Gallery, Sofia.*

Fig. 23. Aubrey Beardsley, Caricature of Oscar Wilde from "Enter Horodias" Illustration in Salome, 1894.

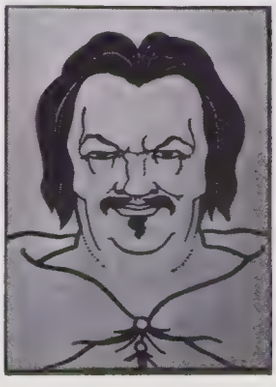


Fig. 24. Aubrey Beardsley, Balzac from La Comedie Humaine.

Fig. 25. Master E.S., Grotesque Alphabet Letter E, c. 1466-67. *Engraving, 55⅔ x 44⅔". Courtesy British Museum.*

any Art Nouveau bravura in this picture is confirmed by the handling of one of that style's favorite images, the snake. Compared to the spry reptile in the second version of *Comedian,* the "ridiculous vestige" hanging from the Gorgon's head is, appropriately, lifeless and unaggressive as a pictorial shape.

The *Perseus* represents an extreme in grotesque "modeling" in this "strict" series; compared to it the *Threatening Head* (Fig. 2) is sympathetic—an impression which is reinforced iconographically by the appearance of earrings, an attribute which in the *Comedian* graced the last of the "grave, moral" heads. *Threatening Head* is the only male head to appear in strict frontal view in the series. The intensity of the strabismic stare is arresting. It shares the mesmerizing hold of Stuck's great *Lucifer* of 1890 (Fig. 22). Technique follows theme, for it is in this print especially that the hypnotic power exerted by Klee's stippled surface patterns takes effect. The handling of the forehead is a Gongoristic multiplication of expanding discs which set into vibration analogous forms in the chin, cheeks, eyeballs, and body of the "sharply negative little demon." This device of a sinister animal perched atop the head has been compared to Beardsley's 1895 illustration for Poe's story *The Black Cat*[44] and other Beardsley images are also conceivable as prototypes for Klee's menacing head: for the animal "hat," the owl-

Fig. 26. Paul Klee, Two Men Meet, Each Supposing the Other to be of Higher Rank, 1903. *Etching, 4-5/8 x 8-1/8".*

Fig. 27. Berlin Lieutenants, cartoon from Jugend, 1904, No. 43, p. 861.

Fig. 28. Paul Klee, Crown Mania (The Monarchist), 1904. *Etching.*

Fig. 29. Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand, 1516-17. *Oil on panel (right panel). Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

Fig. 30. Paul Klee, Hero with a Wing, 1905. *Etching, 10 x 6¼".*

Fig. 31. Photograph of *Kaiser Wilhelm II* Practicing Military Maneuvers, c. 1914.

capped caricature of Oscar Wilde in *Salome*'s "Enter Herodias" illustration (Fig. 23); for the riveting frontality, the Balzac portrait from "La Comédie Humaine" (Fig. 24), to say nothing of Beardsley's own solemn-faced staring *Self-Portrait.* A fifteenth-century source closer to home is also quite possible: the Grotesque Alphabet of the Master ES (Fig. 25). The assurance of technique and inventive powers of Klee do not beg for such models however. The analysis of facial muscles and their effect upon expression which had formed part of the Academy training under Stuck was put to new advantage by Klee in this and the other heads in the series to build a physiognomy of potent abstract forms.

The four remaining prints from the "Ten Inventions" indicate an interesting change in Klee's attitude and stylistic aims. They comprise the complete group of standing male or man-like figures: *Two Men, Crown Mania, Hero with a Wing,* and *Aged Phoenix.* Compared to the plastic values and angular three-dimensionality emphasized in the earlier female nudes, the male figures depend more on their containing silhouettes for structural articulation. The previously-mentioned rubbery or wooden quality of these figures results from a decrease in accent upon sectional differentation and an adherence of the stippling pattern to a decorative whole. The handling of the thorax in *Hero with a Wing* is the most fully-developed example of this nonrepresentational functioning of small linear elements within an enclosing contour. The substitution of this arbitrary ornamental schema for a more traditional modeling offers a new anti-naturalness which reinforces the thematic intent of poking fun at humanity.

The hypocritical aspects of social conventions which Klee treated in *Two Men Meet, Each Supposing the Other to be of Higher Rank* (Fig. 26) had been the subject of many of Daumier's lithographs (see especially the *Citizens in the Bath),* and comparison with the French satirist points up the basic impersonality utilized by Klee in his parody. Only the faces are differentiated in *Two Men.* Klee does not primarily contrast two physiques, but instead allows the anonymity of nakedness to function as pure pattern. Nevertheless, the stylish mutton-chop whiskers of the right-hand figure in Klee's print places his bowing sycophants in modern times, and measured against similar but tame treatments of social mores in *Jugend* (Fig. 27), the acerbity of Klee's satire is all the more pungent. As expressive vehicles for caricature, the stooped poses of *Two Men* could well have been indirectly inspired by the mincing figures on Romanesque capitals[45] or the curtsying stances of Morris Dance images, such as the late fifteenth-century carved wood-

en figurines by Erasmus Grasser which were to be seen in the Old Town Hall in Munich. The successful balance of content and form in this print restates the earlier achievement of *Virgin in a Tree* in terms of a freer invention no longer founded on a specific rebuttal of classicism.

This new freedom is responsible for the remarkable transformation of an ordinary "diver" pose in *Crown Mania* (Fig. 28) into a cantilevered pictorial construction of paired, crossed, and elongated protrusions which independently reaffirm the dominating silhouette placed against a black background. Exactly how "gothic" Klee's rubbery anatomy has become may be ascertained by comparing his obeisant figure with the sagging impaled bodies of Niklaus Manuel Deutsch's *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand* alter-wing panels in the Bern Kunstmuseum (Fig. 29).

Just who is this "Monarchist," as Klee also called his *Crown Mania* print? Why, in age-old democratic Switzerland, should this subject even engage Klee's satirical attention? The answer is the political situation in the two Germanies—aggressive Prussia versus insouciant Bavaria—as Klee had come to know it while living in Munich. Many of the cartoons in the two Munich-published satirical weeklies, *Simplicissimus* and *Jugend,* jeered openly at North German politics and the back page of almost every issue of *Jugend* was devoted to making fun of the

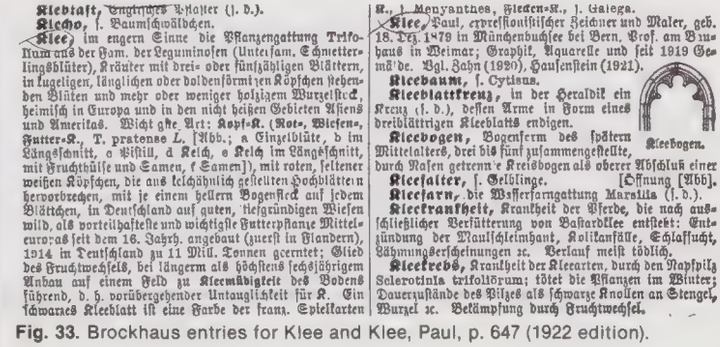
military ambitions of Prussia's restless monarch. It is tempting in the light of this to see an unconscious parallel between Klee's *Hero with a Wing* (Fig. 30) and the real-life "tragicomic hero" Kaiser Wilhelm II (Fig. 31), with his own withered and crippled left arm and compensatory megalomania. Klee's own interpretation is as follows:

> 'Hero with a Wing,' a tragicomic hero, perhaps a Don Quixote of ancient times. This formula and poetic idea, which murkily made its appearance ... has now finally been clarified and developed. The man, born with only one wing, in contrast with divine creatures, makes incessant efforts to fly. In doing so, he breaks his arms and legs, but persists under the banner of his idea. The contrast between his statue-like, solemn attitude and his already ruined state needed especially to be captured, as an emblem of the tragicomic.[46]

While the serious technical handling of *Hero with a Wing* indicates Klee's sustained interest in activating the pictorial surface—a feature which is not at all offset by the inclusion of an explanatory text in the lower right-hand corner of the print—the abbreviatory treatment and chimerical elaboration in *Aged Phoenix* (Fig. 32) reveal a resurgence of poetic inspiration in this, the last of the full-length figures. This is corroborated by

1. Begun from about 1907 on; reproduced in Felix Klee, *Paul Klee,* New York, 1962, pp. 201-03.
2. Paul Klee, *The Diaries of Paul Klee,* 1898-1918, ed. with introduction by Felix Klee, Berkeley, 1968.
3. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 411/412, p. 119.
4. *Idem,* entry 469, p. 133.
5. *Idem,* entry 413, p. 120.
6. *Idem,* entry 420, p. 122.
7. *Idem,* entry 493, p. 138.
8. *Idem,* entry 453, p. 130.
9. *Idem,* entry 425, p. 124.
10. *Idem,* entry 430, p. 125.
11. *Idem,* entry 83, p. 34.
12. Grohmann indicates that the three versions of the *Comedian* were counted as a single Invention by Klee; see Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee,* New York, 1967, pp. 102-04. Note also Klee's first selection of the prints to be exhibited, as recorded in his diary, entry 764, p. 199. *Woman Sowing Weeds* was substituted for *Feminine Charm* in the final selection sent to the *Sezession.*
13. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 425, p. 124.
14. Felix Klee, *Paul Klee,* p. 8.
15. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 513, p. 143.
16. *Idem,* entry 335, p. 79.
17. *Idem,* entry 618, p. 173.
18. *Idem,* entry 403, p. 109.
19. *Idem,* entry 4.30, p. 113.
20. *Idem,* entry 4.13, pp. 105-06.
21. *Idem,* entry 456, p. 130.
22. *Idem,* entry 495, p. 139.
23. *Idem,* entry 6.13, 6.14, p. 143.
24. *Idem,* entry 904 (written in 1911), p. 265.
25. See James Thrall Soby, *The Prints of Paul Klee,* New York, 1945, p. iv.
26. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 514, p. 144.
27. *Idem,* entry 366, p. 87.

Fig. 32. Paul Klee, Aged Phoenix, 1905. *Etching, 10 x 7¼".*



Kleblatt, englisches Pflaster (s. d.).
Klecho, s. Baumschwämchen.
Klee, im engern Sinne die Pflanzengattung Trifolium aus der Fam. der Leguminosen (Unterfam. Schmetterlingsblüter), Kräuter mit drei- oder fünfzähligen Blättern, in kugeligen, länglichen oder doldenförmigen Köpfchen stehenden Blüten und mehr oder weniger holzigem Wurzelstock, heimisch in Europa und in den nicht heißen Gebieten Asiens und Amerikas. Wicht gute Art: **Kopf-K.** (**Rot-, Wiesen-, Futter-K.,** T. pratense L. [Abb.; a Einzelblüte, b im Längsschnitt, c Pistill, d Kelch, e Kelch im Längsschnitt, mit Fruchthülse und Samen, f Samen]), mit roten, seltener weißen Köpfchen, die aus kelchähnlich gestellten Hochblättern hervorbrechen, mit je einem hellern Bogenfleck auf jedem Blättchen, in Deutschland auf guten, tiefgründigen Wiesen wild, als vorteilhafteste und wichtigste Futterpflanze Mitteleuropas seit dem 16. Jahrh. angebaut (zuerst in Flandern), 1914 in Deutschland zu 11 Mill. Tonnen geerntet; Glied des Fruchtwechsels, bei längerm als höchstens sechsjährigem Anbau auf einem Feld zu **Kleemüdigkeit** des Bodens führend, d. h. vorübergehender Untauglichkeit für K. Ein schwarzes Kleeblatt ist eine Farbe der franz. Spielkarten [...] K., j. Menyanthes, **Fieber-K.,** j. Galega.
Klee, Paul, expressionistischer Zeichner und Maler, geb. 18. Dez. 1879 in Münchenbuchsee bei Bern, Prof. am Bauhaus in Weimar; Graphik, Aquarelle und seit 1919 Gemälde. Vgl. Zahn (1920), Hausenstein (1921).
Kleebaum, s. Cytisus.
Kleeblattkreuz, in der Heraldik ein Kreuz (s. d.), dessen Arme in Form eines dreiblättrigen Kleeblatts endigen.
Kleebogen, Bogenform des spätern Mittelalters, drei bis fünf zusammengestellte, durch Nasen getrennte Kreisbogen als oberer Abschluß einer [Öffnung [Abb].
Kleefalter, s. Gelblinge.
Kleefarn, die Wasserfarngattung Marsilia (s. d.).
Kleekrankheit, Krankheit der Pferde, die nach ausschließlicher Verfütterung von Bastardklee entsteht: Entzündung der Maulschleimhaut, Kolikanfälle, Schlaffsucht, Lähmungserscheinungen etc. Verlauf meist tödlich.
Kleekrebs, Krankheit der Kleearten, durch den Napfpilz Sclerotinia trifoliorum; tötet die Pflanzen im Winter; Dauerzustände des Pilzes als schwarze Knollen an Stengel, Wurzel etc. Bekämpfung durch Fruchtwechsel.

Fig. 33. Brockhaus entries for Klee and Klee, Paul, p. 647 (1922 edition).

Klee's retrospective speculations on the print:

> The 'Aged Phoenix' does not represent an ideal figure; he is really 500 years old, and as can be seen, all sorts of things happened to him during that time. The cross between realism and fable is what produces the comic effect. ... Although Ovid is not the right author for it, a number of nice things are to be read there about this bird (Metamorphoses XV, 393 f.). I prefer him not to be brutally burned, in this I agree with Ovid.[47]

Klee could not end this three year production with the scherzo note of *Aged Phoenix.* His last statement in the sour style, *Threatening Head,* has something of a self-portrait affirmation in its great technical summary of formal achievements. The anti-classical reaction to "the great humiliation of the apprenticeship in Rome" has been assuaged, and the way toward new pictorial freedom independent of literary inspiration lay ahead. Thus it was that Klee could write: "I am almost inclined to believe that this will be the last print in the strict style and that something entirely new will follow."[48] Something new certainly did follow—the "real" Paul Klee. But for those who take the time to look, the sardonic, contemporary humanism of Klee's sour prints remains an intriguing palimpsest of the remembrance of things past.

28. *Idem,* entry 514, p. 143.
29. *Idem,* entry 515, p. 144.
30. See for example the reproductions in *Katalog der farbigen Kunstblätter aus der Münchner "Jugend"* (1896-1922), Munich, 1923; especially Otto Geigenberger, *The Sleeping Tree,* #4016 and Hermann Moest, *Dryad,* #1623.
31. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 514, p. 144.
32. *Idem,* entry 519, p. 144.
33. Felix Klee, *Paul Klee,* p. 9.
34. See Fritz Schneider, *Plastisch-Anatomischer Handatlas für Akademien, Kunstschüler, und zum Selbstunterricht,* with several drawings by Franz Stuck, 6th ed., Leipzig, 1929, p. 1.
35. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 315, p. 76.
36. *Idem,* entry 327, p. 78.
37. *Idem,* entry 340, p. 79.
38. *Idem,* entry 400, p. 106.
39. *Idem,* entry 582, p. 161.
40. Goldwater discusses Klee's use of this technique at length in reference to the borrowing of such forms from drawings of schizophrenics. Although Klee did study such sources, this dates from his association with the *Blaue Reiter,* and the conspicuous application of this knowledge at such an early date in the satirical etchings, as Goldwater suggests (he cites *Woman and Beast* and *Hero with a Wing* as examples), is not convincing. See Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Painting,* New York, 1938, p. 155 and note 7.
41. Bern's Niklaus Manuel Deutsch (1484-1530) added a short dagger to his monogram and this feature may have inspired Klee's sword in the second version of *Comedian,* if not perhaps his own three-leaf clover "signature."
42. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 618, p. 173.
43. *Idem,* entry 580 and entry 582, pp. 159-61.
44. Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Paul Klee,* New York, 1952, p. 14.
45. Werner Hofmann, *Caricature from Leonardo to Picasso,* London, 1957, p. 136
46. Klee, *The Diaries,* entry 585, p. 162.
47. *Idem,* entry 602, p. 168.
48. *Idem,* entry 602, pp. 168-69.

PAUL KLEE AND THE INNER TRUTH TO NATURE

SIXTEN RINGBOM

Klee was a collector of natural forms, but his first-hand knowledge of biological paradigms did not translate directly or systematically into Klee's work, mitigated as it was by Klee's special concern for the aberrant, the primitive, and the personal.

When Klee retired from the Bauhaus to take up a professorship in the Academy of Düsseldorf, his colleagues, pupils, and friends voiced their regret in the periodical *bauhaus,* which devoted its last issue in 1931 to Klee.

Solemn words of farewell demanded by the occasion are uttered, various aspects of Klee's personality and activity are commented on, and attempts are even made to sum up aspects of his art. An account of his pedagogical work is given by one of his pupils, Christof Hertel, in a contribution called "The Genesis of Forms, or On Klee's Theory of Forms."

Hertel's article is in many ways illuminating. Among other things, it reflects the impression made by Klee on his audience at the Bauhaus: a mixture of scientist and sage, of the painstaking investigator with the inspired prophet. Klee's method, Hertel assures us, was exact and scientific, but nonetheless "altogether Klee-like"—surely an important qualification. Klee wanted his pupils to see "the organization and structure of plants and animals." He wanted them to sense form, not only by optical means, but as a reflection of a synthetic whole. It was in order to explore the underlying structure that Klee had developed what Hertel calls "the embryology of form," a method capable of penetrating beneath the finished shape, the outer shell of things. It does not, Hertel says, take a mystic to recognize that there is something else behind the objects. "That this is the case, is clearly enough demonstrated by modern science, indeed by the most modern sciences (such as parapsychology)."

In Hertel's opinion, Klee's morphological research was a challenge to conventional science, the task of which it was to develop his findings with its own strict methods. Like all new and epoch-making ideas, Klee's results derive from intuitive imagination. "They are, just like all sciences were in the beginning, almost purely speculative. Even chemistry was once alchemy."[1]

To a wider public, or at any rate to art audiences outside the German-speaking countries, Klee's claims to extraphysical insight into the workings of nature are not, perhaps, very well known. Nor do they always seem absolutely relevant to the enjoyment of his art, even to those who happen to know something about them. We tend to feel that the speculative trait does not quite fit into our image of the artist as the great master of the small format, of miniatures full of poetic invention and expressive line. We are inclined to connect him with qualities such as bizarre fantasy, mild satire, and humane wit, rather than with any arid constructions in the field of natural philosophy.

Yet we have Klee's own word for the importance that he attached to the exact but intuitive study of nature.

Ways of Studying Nature

Klee's basic views on the relationship between art and nature are laid down in the essay *"Wege des Naturstudiums"* of 1923, which opens with an important declaration of principle:

> The dialogue with Nature remains a *conditio sine qua non* for the artist. The artist is a human being, himself Nature and a piece of Nature in the context of Nature.

Klee then goes on to say that there are a number of different ways of studying nature. In order to illustrate his point, he reproduces a diagram (Fig. 1), which has since become famous. Here the two pear-shaped figures represent, on the left, the artist ("Eye" and "Ego"), and on the right, the object ("You"). The art of yesterday, and the study of nature that served it, consisted of a meticulous investigation of the *appearances* of objects as transmitted optically and physically through the air between artist and object. "Excellent representations of the surfaces of things, filtered through the air, were achieved in this way; hence the art of optical observation became developed, whereas, conversely, the art of vision and of visualizing non-optical impressions and ideas remained neglected."

Klee does not wish to underrate the achievements of the study of apparent phenomena. But he emphasizes that it no longer answers our needs. We must expand the study of nature; the artist of today is no mere camera. The visible surface does not present the whole truth. There is also an inner side of things, an inner side which can be revealed through dissection and the application of delicate instruments. In this way the material structure and the material functions can be found out,

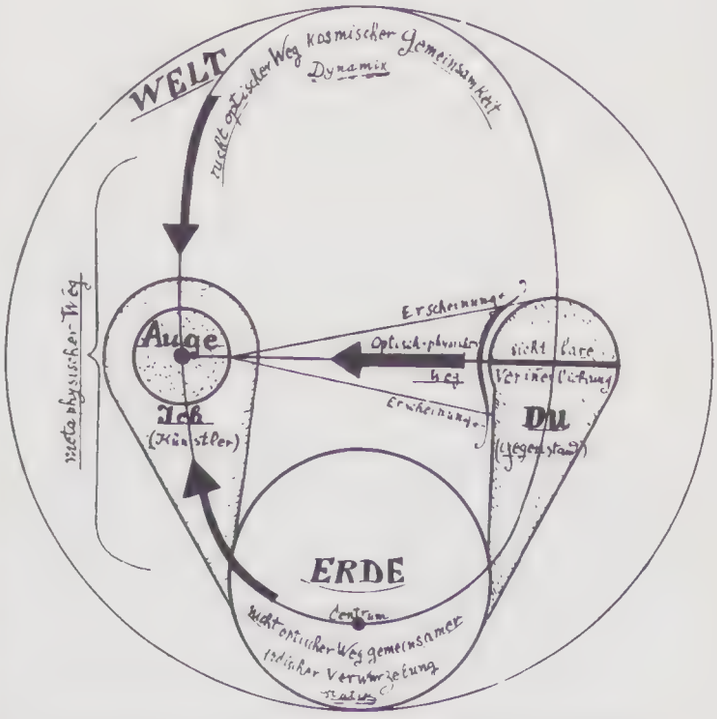


Fig. 1. Paul Klee, Ways of Studying Nature, 1923. *Published in Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923, Munich, 1923.*

and once they have been established we also understand the surface better than before. We can thus learn to form conclusions about the inner structure even on the mere basis of the surface.

Having dealt with the material means of exploring the inner structure, Klee goes on to the most important part of his essay. In addition to these methods, there are other ways of knowledge resulting in the "humanization" of the objects. First, there is the non-optical way of "common earthly rooting," which affects the eye from below (indicated by the lower arrow passing Earth's center). Second, there is the non-optical way of cosmic community coming from above (upper arrow). The common earthly rooting is connected with static balance and static forms, whereas the cosmic connection finds an outlet in dynamic forms, in our longing for freedom from earthly bonds, and in free movement.

All three ways meet in the eye, where they unite in "the synthesis of outer observation and inner vision." The resultant forms are totally different from the optical image, although they are compatible with the object if considered from an aspect of totality. The student's gradual progress in the dialogue with the natural object is reflected in his work, where he assimilates his experiences gained in all three ways of study. This enables him to create in freedom, to create abstract representations possessing a new naturalness, the naturalness of the work. Klee's conclusion echoes the introduction:

> Then he creates a work, or takes part in the creation of works that are a simile to the work of God.[2]

"Ways of Studying Nature" can be supplemented with other texts by Klee dating from the same period, although they do not

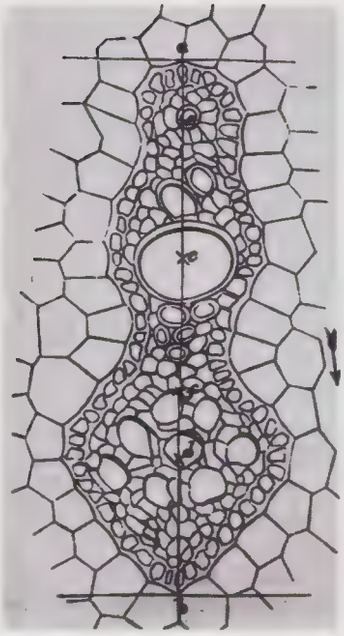


Fig. 2. Section of a stalk of Musa Sapientium analyzed according to the Golden Section. *From Adolf Zeising, Neue Lehre von den Proportionen . . . , 1854, fig. 131.*

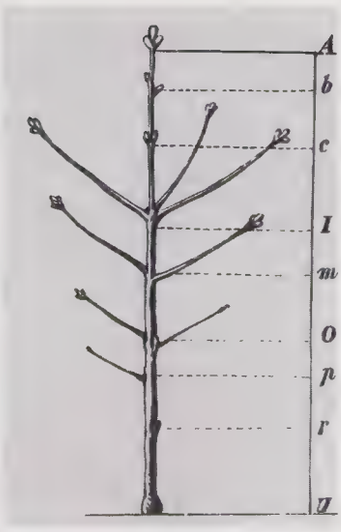


Fig. 3. Growth and Branching analyzed according to the Golden Section. *From Zeising, Neue Lehre . . . , fig. 137.*

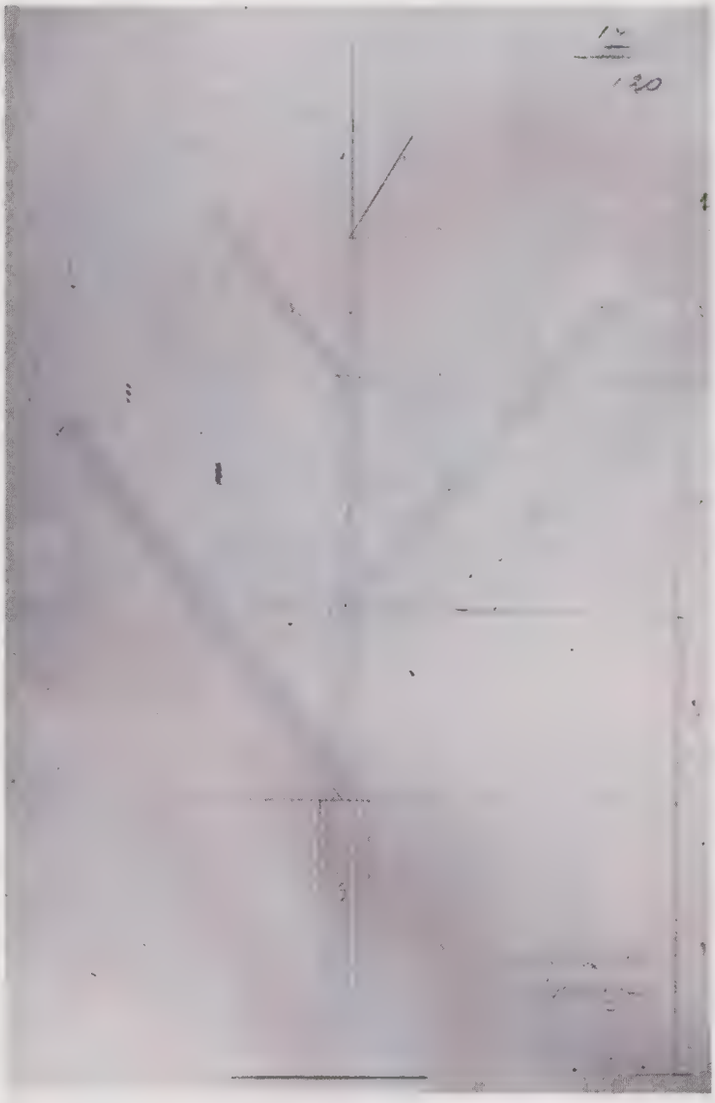


Fig. 4. Paul Klee, Growth and Branching analyzed according to the Arithmetic Progression 1, 3, 5 . . . *Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne (Theor. Mss. 17/20). Copyright SPADEM, 1977.*

add very much to it, representing elaborations rather than extensions of the ideas already expressed in the essay. Thus the theme of dissection and finer instruments is elaborated in the lecture *Über die moderne Kunst* of the following year, 1924:

> And is it not true that the relatively short step represented by the glance through the microscope presents images to the eye that we should declare fantastic and exaggerated if we happened to see them in some place by chance and without being aware of their purpose.
>
> But on coming across such an illustration in some sensational magazine Mr X would exclaim indignantly: "What's this—natural forms? It looks more like bad design."[3]

But Klee is anxious to add that the modern artist does not preoccupy himself with microscopy, history, or paleontology as such. He does so only in a relative, flexible way, not being subject to any sort of scientific verifiability of the truth to nature. The artist works in complete freedom. He longs for the innermost region of nature, the heart of creation, where the secret key to everything is kept. Art does not merely render what can be seen but visualizes "secret visions."

An equally mystical note is sounded toward the end of Klee's article "Exakte Versuche im Bereich der Kunst" of 1928 which, in spite of its title, emphasizes the role of intuition rather than rational methods.[4] Klee wanted to combine intuitive insight with rational consideration; even in the very abstruse and oracular early version of this article he emphasized the value of exactness: "Knowledge should be as precise as possible."[5] And there is no denying that Klee's teaching at the Bauhaus, such as we know it from his published notes, has a rational, sometimes almost pedantic form even where the contents verge on the absurd.

Romantic Speculation and Proportional Analysis

In the very opening words of his essay on *Naturstudium,* Klee had explained how the artist comes to work according to natural laws: it is simply because the artist is himself part of nature and functions as a piece of nature.

As early as 1905 Klee had argued that the laws of nature are the main concern of the artist. Photography did indeed come as a fair warning against the materialistic outlook:

> What, then, is "Nature"? What matters is the law, according to which "Nature" functions, and such as it occasionally reveals itself to the artist.[6]

It has long been recognized that Klee's views on art, nature, and the laws governing both, reflect notions inherited from the German romantic tradition and from idealistic philosophy of nature. The analogy between art and nature had been elaborated by J.G. Herder and by Goethe; for various reasons, posterity seems to have given the main credit—or blame—for the idea to the latter.

According to well known and oft-quoted maxims and sayings of Goethe, the Beautiful is a manifestation of secret natural laws that otherwise would have remained hidden forever. This is why every one who wishes to unveil the secret of nature feels an irresistible longing for art, her worthiest interpreter.[7] Like the creations of nature, works of art are produced by men according to true natural laws. In the works there is then the most perfect accord, "there is necessity, there is God."[8] Beauty in nature consists of the order and the laws of nature. The beauty produced by the artist is founded on the same order; both kinds of beauty mix in the soul, but it is the latter alone that determines the level of the artist.[9]

These samples may suffice to show how firmly anchored Klee was in the romantic tradition. It so happens that the artist's admiration of Goethe is documented, but even if this had not been the case, the sheer strength of the cultural tradition, the *Bildung* based on the German classics and implanted from school level onwards, would have accounted for Klee's familiarity with these ideas.

But more remarkable than Klee's familiarity with romantic art theory is the application that he made of it. It does rather seem as if Klee had drawn quite similar conclusions from the idea of the inner analogy of art and nature as did some nineteenth-century thinkers before him. There is no reason to believe that Klee knew of these obscure later sources, and it seems that he formed his conclusions independently of them. Actually, one is tempted to ascribe the general similarity between Klee's ac-

plications of the analogy, and those of his nineteenth-century precursors, to the logic of the idea itself.

More specifically, if, now, there are some artistically significant laws common to the inner structure of nature and works of art, then there must exist some way of discovering these laws by patient analysis and reflection. One obvious possibility suggesting itself at this point would be numerical proportions. Such a solution might also commend itself thanks to the tradition from Antiquity and the Renaissance.

During his Italian trip in 1903 Klee was impressed by humanist architecture, which set him thinking about harmonic relations. Proportional architecture, he argued, represents a convenient short-cut for the artist, a faster way of learning than pictures or "Nature": "Once you have grasped the numerical character of the concept 'organism', the study of nature is made easier and more correct."[10] Almost two decades were to pass before Klee got the opportunity to put this realization into practice in his teaching at the Bauhaus.

To nineteenth-century speculative aesthetics, harmonic proportion had suggested itself as an answer to the riddle of the common laws of nature and art. In the 1840s, the Edinburgh painter David Ramsay Hay (1798-1866), a prolific writer on proportion and color, published a system based on a method of triangulation. With almost aggressive optimism Hay applied his "natural principles of form" to the human figure, architecture, and art in general. "The most beautiful form in nature, and the most beautiful form created by art, *must* be governed by the same law. To one law I have attempted to reduce them."[11] These words give some indication of the challenge which the assumed analogy between art and nature must have presented to post-romantic speculative aesthetics.

Carl-Gustav Carus (1789-1869), a doctor, friend of Goethe's, writer on the philosophy of nature, and a romantic landscape painter of no mean ability, also proposed a system for the beauty of the human figure in two books published in the 1850s. But the most ambitious attempt was made by Adolf Zeising. The title of his most important work, published in 1854, reads (in translation): *A New Doctrine of Human Proportion Derived from a hitherto Unrecognized Law of Morphology Pervading All Nature and Art.*[12] Zeising's principle is, however, not quite as original as the title of his book might imply: it is the Golden Section, nothing more or less. But his theory is more comprehensive than the earlier systems, which had dealt mainly with the human figure and merely suggested the general validity of the respective principles of proportion.

Zeising sees his principle at work not only in the human figure, in classical sculpture and in architecture, but also in the solar system and the structure of Earth, in the formation of crystals, and in the growth of plants and animals (see Figs. 2, 3, and 4). Organic growth, in particular, is believed by Zeising to be governed by the Golden Section; and in order to prove his point he analyzes the proportions of microscopic samples of cellular tissue as well as the parts and limbs of plants and animals. As might be expected, Zeising finds the corroboration he seeks. Systems of harmonic proportion, whatever their underlying principle, always tend to work to their authors' satisfaction, and Zeising's system is no exception to the rule.

Despite the effort spent on them, harmonic systems have made rather little impression on practicing artists, whose attention was roused by more powerful programs during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The ideas of Zeising and his fellow theorists have, on the whole, been committed to oblivion as curiosities and learned constructions, a fact which has not deterred speculative minds of later times from making renewed attempts to unravel the secret of art and nature.

Indeed, a younger contemporary of Klee, the Berne professor of music Hans Kayser (1891-1964), devoted the best part of his life to a kind of Neo-Pythagorean doctrine intended to explain the workings of nature in terms of musical harmony. Most of Kayer's books date from the 1930s and 1940s, and his magnum opus was even published posthumously. But as pointed out by Jürg Spiller, a copy of an early work entitled *Orpheus, Morphologische Fragmente einer allgemeinen Harmonie* (Berlin 1924) was in Klee's library.[13] There may even have been personal contacts, since the artist's father and Hans Kayser both happened to be teachers of music in Berne.

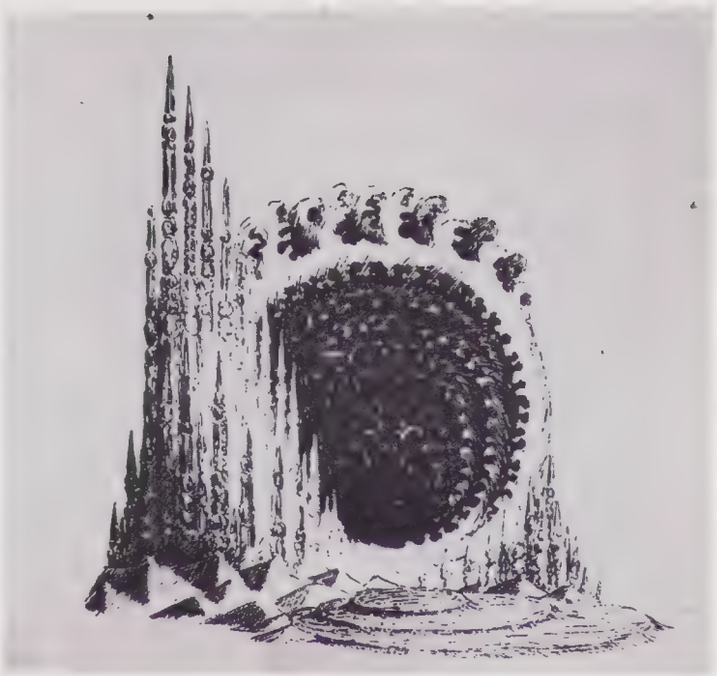


Fig. 5. Hans Luckhardt, Architectural Form-Fantasy, 1920. *Published in Ruf Zum Bauen, 1920, p. 25.*

Fig. 6 Rudolf Belling, Triad (Dreiklang), 1919 (cast in 1950). *Courtesy Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich: Staatsgalerie Moderner Kunst.*

A more viable approach than the analysis of proportion was suggested by the new attitudes to natural forms promoted by the Arts and Crafts Movement and Art Nouveau-Jugendstil. The awakening interest in morphology and its artistic uses was stimulated by the spectacular advance of biology during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and by the intense debate on Darwin and the theory of evolution.

In 1894—the unofficial year of birth of Jugendstil and Art Nouveau—Moritz Meurer conveniently published his *Pflanzenbilder,* a collection of "ornamentally useful studies of nature for architects, designers, and ornamentalists." Between 1899 and 1904 Ernst Haeckel, the well known popularizer of the theory of evolution, issued his best-selling *Kustformen der Natur,* which contained lavish illustrations of medusae and other species that were not by that time generally expected to excel in beauty. Haeckel's book thus suggested that artistically profitable forms may be found in the more unexpected nooks of nature.

Fig. 7. Paul Klee, King of the Sea Shells, 1933. *Watercolor and oil, 11 x 17". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, 1977.*

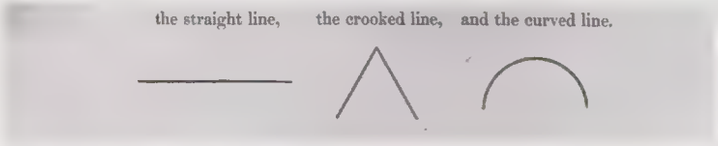


Fig. 8. David Ramsay Hay, Straight, Crooked, and Curved Lines, 1842. *From Hay, The Natural Principles and Analogy of the Harmony of Form, 1842, p. 14. Courtesy National Library of Scotland.*

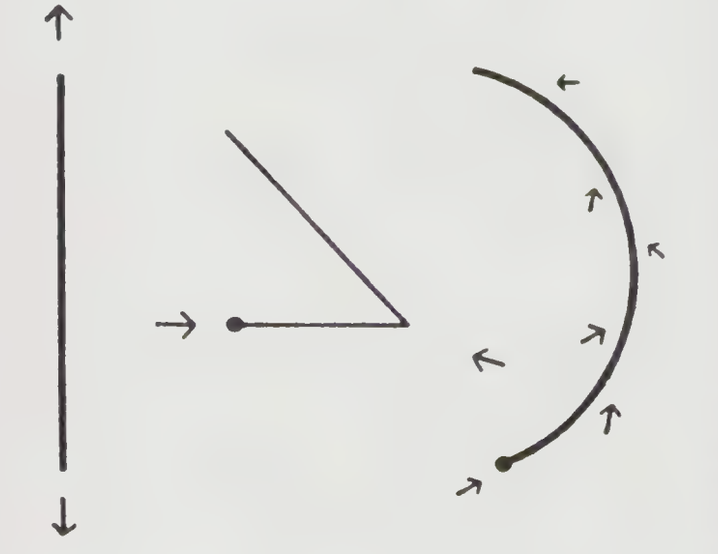


Fig. 9. Wassily Kandinsky, Straight, Angular, and Curved Lines, 1926. *From Kandinsky, Punkt und Linie zu Fläche, 1926, p. 74.*

Meurer and Haeckel have been mentioned as instances of a vast literary genre devoted to the exploration of organic form from an aesthetic point of view. It is a genre that has survived to our own day, but in the early years of the century it was still a novelty and part of the intellectual environment that made Heinrich Stadelmann exclaim that the great achievement of our era is biological thinking.

Klee and his Contemporaries

The idea of the inner truth to nature was embraced by several of Klee's contemporaries, and it was indeed one of the cornerstones of the early justification of abstract art. In his "Backward Glance," published in 1913, Kandinsky describes his hesitation before taking the decisive step into nonrepresentational art. "What is to take the place of the discarded object?" This was the overwhelming question. Eventually Kandinsky realized the true connection between the two worlds of nature and art. The most abstract works, the Compositions, are "works that just like the works of nature have grown 'out of themselves' as independent entities, entirely in accordance with laws." To create a work is to create a world—*Werkschöpfung ist Weltschöpfung.*[14]

Klee and Kandinsky seem to have formed their convictions independently of each other, a fact which may well have appeared significant when the two met in Munich before World War I and when they compared notes at the Bauhaus in the Twenties. In 1920 Klee had made a preliminary summary of his beliefs in a contribution to Kasimir Edschmid's volume *Schöpferische Konfession.*[15] His *Pedagogical Sketchbook* followed in 1925, while Kandinsky published his theoretical treatise *Point and Line to Plane* in 1926. Kandinsky had commenced work on his book even before the war, but when he completed it at the Bauhaus, discussions with Klee had begun to make themselves felt. It looks as if the illustrations of mineral, organic, cellular, and anatomical stuctures which Kandinsky included in *Point and Line* were inspired by this contact. The illustrations are rather loosely connected with the text, which actually contains a warning against too literal interpretations of the analogy between art and nature. According to Kandinsky, some natural laws do not allow for eccentricities, and for this reason they cannot apply to artistic creation.[16]

In the Thirties Kandinsky became increasingly convinced of the inner analogy of art and nature. Some of his arguments echo Klee: in 1930 he declared that man is beginning to acquire the ability to see through the surface of Nature into its essence and contents. "In due time it will be strikingly demonstrated that 'abstract' art does not exclude the connection with nature, but that this connection is indeed stronger and more intense than ever in recent times."[17] Five years later he wrote that "Abstract art exists without 'nature', but is subject to the laws of *Nature.*"[18] It did not worry Kandinsky if a "natural form" sneaked in among his own forms; he did not feel obliged to delete it. "Who knows, maybe all our 'abstract' forms are 'natural forms', every one of them."[19]

Actually the idea of a new, inner truth to nature as the basis for a future renaissance of the arts was so widespread during the early decades of this century that it is almost impossible to trace the influences in detail. In 1916 Heinrich Stadelmann, the psychiatrist and partisan of expressionism, had made liberal use of the biological argument in his defense of the anti-realism of the new art. The great achievement of our era is *biological thinking,* which has revolutionized science and art. Expressionist art aims at inner truth and away from the external world; it is biological thinking that has taught us that "the invisible inner element produces visible form."[20]

Rather similar to Klee's outlook is the program outlined by the sculptor Rudolf Belling in the manifesto "The New Study of Nature."[21] Since it was published in 1925 it may (although it need not) have been partly inspired by Klee's "Ways of Studying Nature." Belling's opening words stress the analogy of the two kinds of creation: "Nature creates forms out of her inner laws. The law is of primary importance, the form, being the expression of the law, is of secondary importance. In artistic work, form is also secondary." Belling, however, differs from Klee in his rationalistic approach; in his opinion it is the engineer's building that forms the best parallel to natural creation. "Here is the beginning of the new study of nature, which takes as its model the organic conformity to laws in nature."

Belling's views on the structural truth of building construction are connected with ideas then current among the German architectural vanguard. The value of natural paradigms was discussed by the experimenting architects in the circle of Bruno Taut, who had initiated an exchange of ideas in the form of letters sent between members of the circle. In one of his contributions to this "Utopian Correspondence," Hans Luckhardt, in opposition to Taut, argued for a prudent use of natural models: "With one qualification, we all strive for natural forms: the crux of this is that the forms must not imitate nature as does a landscape painting, but must be akin to it in spirit. *Architecture should not imitate Nature, but must itself be Nature.*"[22]

Seen against the background outlined above, Klee's ideas on the study of nature fall into place within German modernism just before and after World War I. There seems to have been a

remarkably homogeneous ideology at the root of the different programs of painting, sculpture, and even architecture.[23] The common denominator was the revival of romantic and especially Goethean concepts of the inner truth of art. This might explain the different attitude to the role of nature outside the influence of this romantic revival. Although Cézanne had defended his work along similar lines, French modernism tended to treat nature as a true opposite of art, and the need to reconcile the two is not felt.[24]

The Growth of Form

The idea of the analogy of art and nature does not as such give much precise direction as to the actual appearance of the work of art assumed to comply with the inner laws. In the case of Goethe, it was classical sculpture that brought about the great moment of illumination: Goethe's sudden insight into the common laws of nature and art. He sincerely believed that the artists of antiquity had discovered such laws, and that this pristine knowledge had been lost to later ages.

Nor do theories of proportion tell much about the shape of the work. Whether in the versions proposed by Hay or Zeising, they deal with harmonic divisions on a level of abstraction that allows almost unlimited freedom when it comes to the actual invention and execution of the work. Even though one follows, say, the rules of the Golden Section, one is still at liberty to paint like Poussin, Picasso, or Pollock.

Only the biological paradigm defines the actual work in an appreciable manner. Jugendstil and Art Nouveau design aimed at organic structure in this sense. Here architectural limbs and other structural parts were made to vary in thickness and profile according to the stresses they were expected to take up; that is, designed in analogy with the swelling of bones and stalks at the joints and other critical points. Echoes of the Jugendstil conception of natural structure is clearly felt in Hans Luckhardt's architectural form-fantasies (Fig. 5) as well as in Rudolf Belling's sculpture *Dreiklang* (Triad) (Fig. 6). Even in Kandinsky's work of the 1930s, the effect of biological models is felt in forms vaguely alluding to cells, ganglia, protozoa, and organic tissue.

Klee possessed a *Naturaliensammlung* comprising the most different kinds of mineral specimens, plants and animals: stone samples, crystals, fossils, algae, lichens, higher plants, corals, mussels, insects, and so on. During the Twenties he also collected illustrations of natural curiosities, especially molluscs. Occasionally, as pointed out by Spiller, reminiscences of these organic forms are to be seen in Klee's work, especially during the 1930s (Fig. 7).[25] But a systematic use of the biological paradigms was counteracted by other tendencies in Klee's art and personality: his interest in primitive art and folklore, and in the work of children and the mentally ill. Above all, Klee's personal handwriting, his vivid line, resisted the regimentation of organic form as well as that of geometric.

Klee nonetheless took considerable interest in harmonic proportion. Among his notes and studies are texts and drawings dealing with the construction of the Golden Section and other harmonic designs, such as spirals.[26] Like his nineteenth-century precursors, Klee applied his own principle to the phenomenon of growth, when he used the arithmetical progression 1,3,5,7,9. Zeising believed in the Golden Section, Klee experimented with numerical progression, but both responded to their belief in all-pervading laws of art and nature.

There is another parallel between nineteenth- and twentieth-century experiments: the resort to the fundamental elements. Like their precursors, Klee and Kandinsky turned to the simplest possible elements of design. And this with much the same results.

Thus David Ramsay Hay had maintained that there are three elementary types of line capable of producing form: the straight, the crooked, and the curved line. These he reproduced in his *Natural Principles* of 1842, together with their resulting forms, the square, the triangle and the circle (Fig. 8). Kandinsky's treatment of the straight, angular, and curved lines in *Point and Line to Plane* proceeds in a similar way to the three fundamental forms (Fig. 9). Klee, too, starts from the elements in his *Pedagogical Sketchbook,* but proceeds in a typically erratic manner (Fig. 10); the elements are the same and in the same order, but there is that unmistakable flavor which always seems to accompany his penwork.

To Klee, the line was a kind of organism, a being to be taken for a stroll and an elementary form grown out of the point just as a plant has grown out of a seed. Every line reflects inner forces, every line has its own character. Klee shared Kandinsky's belief that lines can express almost anything. As early as 1912 Kandinsky had systematically explored the opposition of angular and curved lines in his paintings.[27] In 1918 one of Kandinsky's admirers, Rudolf Bauer, made an attempt to systematize linear expression (Fig. 11) in an essay called "The Cosmic Movement." Here the pictorial primaries are explained as "cosmic elements" and the building stones of that "absolute painting which draws its substance from the unknown Cosmos."[28] In his pedagogical work of the 1920s, Klee returned, time and time again, to the line and its character (Fig. 12): lines expressing extension and weight, inner pressure and movements, musical

Fig. 10. Paul Klee, Active Lines, 1925. *From Klee, Pädogogisches Skizzenbuch, 1925, p. 10.*

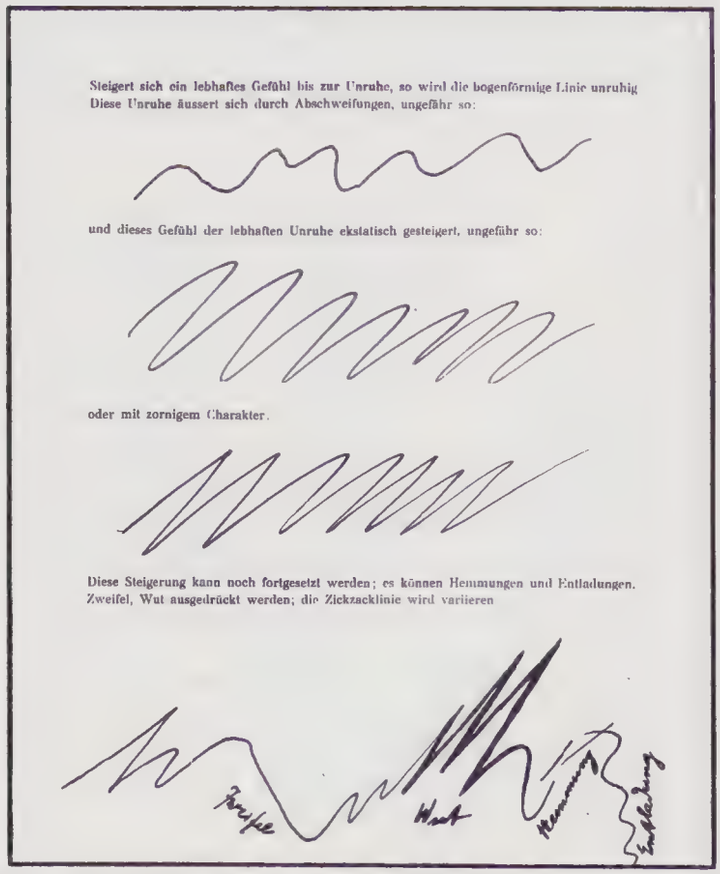

Steigert sich ein lebhaftes Gefühl bis zur Unruhe, so wird die bogenförmige Linie unruhig
Diese Unruhe äussert sich durch Abschweifungen, ungefähr so:
und dieses Gefühl der lebhaften Unruhe ekstatisch gesteigert, ungefähr so:
oder mit zornigem Charakter.
Diese Steigerung kann noch fortgesetzt werden; es können Hemmungen und Entladungen.
Zweifel, Wut ausgedrückt werden; die Zickzacklinie wird variieren

Fig. 11. Rudolf Bauer, Vivid, Restless, Wrathful, etc. Lines. *From H. Walden, Expressionismus, 1918, p. 54.*

tones, etc. The functions and meanings ascribed by Klee to lines of varying description may seem more casual than the pathetically sounding titles given by Bauer. Seen in retrospect, Klee again strikes us as ingenious, whereas Bauer does not quite escape triviality. Still, both are facets of that homogeneous ideology to which reference has been made above.

Reactions to Klee's Claims

Klee's claims to metaphysical knowledge by means of intuitive form research have been taken literally by others than Hertel and his fellow-pupils. Klee's biographer, Will Grohmann, is another notable example, and Grohmann's comparisons of Klee's work to that of physicists may strike many of us as somewhat exaggerated.[29]

But it is not only the artist's admirers that take his claims literally. They have been regarded as a godsend by critics of the entire modern movement. Dr. Ernst Winkler must certainly be

the most ambitious exponent of this school of thought, having produced no less than fifty pages of detailed, point-by-point criticism of "Paul Klee and Exact Science."[30] In this scrutiny Winkler arrives at the expected result: from the strictly scientific point of view, Klee's theories do not stand the test. In Winkler's opinion, Klee's teaching is "to a large part, not only false but sheer nonsense."

Klee did in fact to some extent expose himself to such objections. It is true that he emphasized the relative character of his theories,[31] but he did not dissociate himself from extravagant interpretations of them, and he clearly believed in the gnostic function of art. Together with Kandinsky, he thus has to share responsibility for the more recent vogue of attributing mysterious powers of scientific insight to abstract art.[32] Seen against this background, Winkler's refutation does not appear quite as off the mark as it does at first glance.

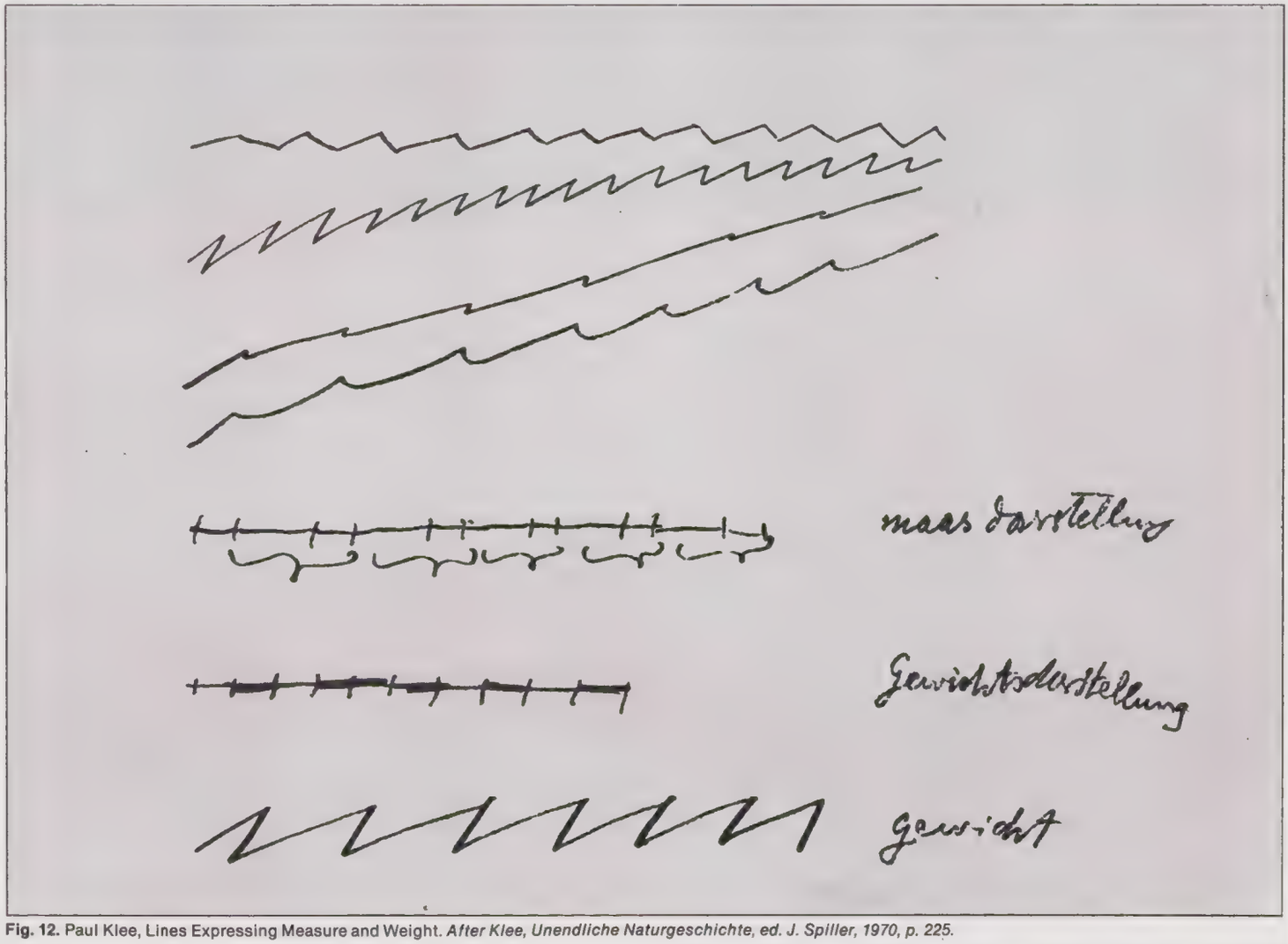


Fig. 12. Paul Klee, Lines Expressing Measure and Weight. *After Klee, Unendliche Naturgeschichte, ed. J. Spiller, 1970, p. 225.*

Helen Schmidt-Nonne, one of Klee's pupils at the Bauhaus, came, perhaps, close to the truth when she wrote about Klee's teaching: "The phrasing of a task often sounded like the formula of the mathematician or the physicist; yet it was, strictly speaking, sheer poetry."[33]

1. Christof Hertel, "Genesis der Formen," *bauhaus,* 3, Dec., 1931.
2. Publ. in *Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923,* Munich 1923, pp. 24f; repr. e.g. in Paul Klee, *Das bildnerische Denken,* 2nd ed., Basle & Stuttgart 1964, pp. 63-67.
3. Klee, *Über die moderne Kunst,* Bern-Bümpliz, 1949, pp. 45ff.
4. *bauhaus* 2/3, 1928, p. 17; repr. in *Das bildnerische Denken,* p. 69f.
5. *Das bildnerische Denken,* p. 59.
6. Paul Klee, *Tagebücher 1898-1918,* Cologne 1957, p. 195.
7. Goethe, *Werke,* Weimar-Edition, I:48, 1897, p. 179.
8. Goethe, *Werke,* I:32, 1906, pp. 77f.
9. *Goethe im Gespräch,* ed. F. Deibel and F. Gundelfinger, Leipzig 1906, p. 21.
10. Klee, *Tagebücher,* pp. 156f. Cf. Carola Giedion-Welcker, *Paul Klee in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten (Rowohlts Monographien),* 1964, p. 19.
11. D.R. Hay, *The Orthographic Beauty of the Parthenon Referred to a Law of Nature,* Edinburgh and London 1853, p. 22.
12. A Zeising, *Neue Lehre von den Proportionen des menschlichen Körpers, aus einem bisher unerkannt gebliebenen, die ganze Natur und Kunst durchdringenden Grundgesetze,* Leipzig 1854. Zeising has two mottoes: one a quotation from Alexander von Humboldt, the other Goethe's "Alle Gleider bilden sich aus nach ew'gen Gesetzen, / und die seltenste Form bewahrt im Geheimen das Urbild."
13. Spiller, in Klee, *Das bildnerische Denken,* p. 519.
14. W. Kandinsky, *Kandinsky 1901-1913,* Berlin 1913, pp. xxv note, and xix.
15. K. Edschmid, ed., *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit, XIII: Schöpferische Konfession,* Berlin 1920, pp. 28-40.
16. Kandinsky, *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche,* 5th ed., Bern-Bümpliz 1964, pp. 122-23.
17. Kandinsky, *Essays über Kunst und Künstler,* 2nd ed., Berne 1963, pp. 152f.
18. Kandinsky, *Essays,* p. 194.
19. Kandinsky, *Essays,* p. 208f.
20. H. Stadelmann, *Unsere Zeit und ihre neue Kunst,* Berlin 1916, pp. 4,18,21.
21. R. Belling, "Das neue Naturstudium," in P. Westheim, ed., *Künstlerbekenntnisse,* Berlin 1925, p. 342f.
22. H. Luckhardt, Circular letter of March 30, 1920; quoted after U. Conrads and H.G. Sperlich, *The Architecture of Fantasy,* New York 1960, p. 143.
23. Architecture may have been a special case. In this field there was the mid-19th-century rationalist tradition represented by William Vose Pickett, Edvard Lacy Garbett, and Leopold Eidlitz, who all use the organic paragone in their criticism of academic tradition. I am indebted to Professor Malcolm Higgs of Edinburgh University for the reference to Pickett and Eidlitz.
24. See, e.g., *[A.]* Ozenfant and *[Ch.-Ed.]* Jeanneret, *La peinture moderne,* Paris *[1925],* pp. i-ii, 37-43. Cf. also W. Haftmann, *Paul Klee,* Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1961, p. 94, where Giacometti and Nolde are adduced as parallels to Klee.
25. Spiller, in *Das bildnerishche Denken,* p. 12 and Klee, *Unendliche Naturgeschichte,* Basle and Stuttgart 1970, pp. 288-91. Klee's organicism is also discussed by J. Glaesemer, *Paul Klee, Die farbigen Werke im Kunstmuseum Bern,* Berne 1976, pp. 160f.
26. Klee, *Unendliche Naturgeschichte,* pp. 285f, 289-91, 295-97.
27. S. Ringbom, *The Sounding Cosmos,* Abo 1970 (*Acta Academiae Aboensis,* Ser. A 38:2), pp. 188f.
28. In H. Walden, ed., *Expressionismus,* Berlin 1918, pp. 52-60. Klee contributed to the illustrations of this volume.
29. W. Grohmann, *Paul Klee,* 4th German ed., Stuttgart 1965, p. 381.
30. In P.H. Diehl, *Grenzen der Malerei,* Vienna and Cologne 1961, pp. 195-224.
31. Klee, *Über die moderne Kunst,* p. 47; cf. Glaesemer, p. 139.
32. To name but a few more important examples of this genre: G. Schmidt and R. Schenk, eds., *Kunst und Naturform—Form in Art and Nature,* 3rd ed., Munich 1967 *[based on a famous exhibition on this theme in Basle in 1958]*; L.R. Wolberg, *Micro-Art, Art-Images in a Hidden World,* New York *[1971]*; C.H. Waddington, *Behind Appearance, A Study of the Relations between Painting and the Natural Sciences in this Century,* Edinburgh 1969.
33. H. Schmidt-Nonne, "Der Unterricht von Paul Klee in Weimar und Dessau" in Paul Klee, *Pädagogisches Skizzenbuch* [New. ed.], Mainz and Berlin 1965, p. 53

FORM-CREATING ENERGIES: PAUL KLEE AND PHYSICS

SARA LYNN HENRY

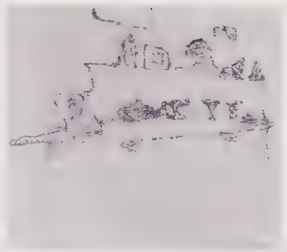


Fig. 2. Paul Klee, Caricature of a Piece of Furniture, 1910. *Pen and ink on paper, 8¾ x 10¼". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, Paris, 1977.*

Fig. 1. Paul Klee, Cosmic Flora, 1923. *Watercolor on paper, 9 x 15¾". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, Paris, 1977.*

Fig. 3. Paul Klee, Germinating Power of the Woods, 1917. *Watercolor on paper. Present whereabouts unknown.*

The Romantic concepts of Energy and Force are invested with new authority and specific physical properties in Klee's pictorial physics.

While teaching at the Bauhaus in the 1920s, Paul Klee took inspiration from several elementary ideas from the sciences for the starting point of his work. Klee was an artist of broad learning and numerous sources; music, literature, children's and primitive art, nature, and his own imagination especially served him well. During the 1920s, ideas from the sciences and nature studies played a role equal to the others. Klee drew especially from physics, mathematics, biology, geology, and meteorology, learning from the diagrammatic forms that the sciences use to visualize concepts as well as learning from the concepts themselves to see what they had to say about the abstract workings of natural phenomena. In his painting Klee would then use these forms and concepts to improvise his own universe of imaginative natural beings.

Klee was especially fascinated by physics and by the explanations that physics could give about the forces to which all physical phenomena are subject. He discussed such categories as statics and dynamics, giving a series of lectures for his students in 1924 appropriately called "Pictorial Mechanics."[1] These lectures probed the types of forces and movement that exist in the real world and by analogy on the picture plane. At the basis of his theoretical framework were Newton's laws of motion. Klee's first category, for example, was what he called "free movement." This was movement by a world body (or vagabond, as he said) that was unchecked and uninfluenced and therefore proceeded in a straight line. He was drawing here directly from Newton's first law of motion, which states that: "Every body continues in its state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line so long as it is not compelled by impressed forces to change that state."[2] Klee also made accurate references at this time and in earlier lectures to such physics concepts as specific gravity,[3] wave motion,[4] the parallelogram of force, vectors, and the trajectory.[5]

The most modern concept that interested Klee was that of energy or energy fields. (He never did directly draw from relativity theory.) He spoke of energy in a metaphorical rather than a technical way, referring to the energies of growth and change. He talked about the energies of a "form-creating nature" that are involved in natural growth, saying that "growth is not only a quantitative striving for elevation, but a spread of energies and transformation of substances on all sides."[6] He worked out a way of visualizing the spread of energies and substances into space by extensions of stippled, crosshatched, and furry lines out from a central linear figure, as in *Cosmic Flora* (1923/176) (Fig. 1), one of the first paintings of this type. Here the flora and figures appear to be quivering with energy, spreading their vital forces out into the environment—forces of life and growth. Their quivering lines could also serve a second metaphorical function, that of shimmering fields of unworldly light and shadow. The dark red, green, and brown lines on a light watercolor ground create a strange negative light like that of a photographic negative. Klee as early as 1910 had written in his diary of wanting to represent light in a new way, not as light elements or as color movement, but as "unfolding energy," shown by heaping up an "untold quantity of energy lines." The lines could even be dark on light, as he said, "the entirely reasonable black made by light on a photographic negative."[7] He later told Grohmann that originally he used these lines to differentiate tonal values.[8] Other uses of the lines are suggested by diagrams in his teachings that show them producing contrast at boundaries and effects of relief.[9] They could also be set into motion to actually bring form to space, as shown by a later drawing, *Spatial Formation by Moving Lines* (1931/144). As always with Klee, a single form idea had numerous sources and divergent interrelated applications.

What, we can ask, were the several sources for Klee's energy lines? In the first instance they were rooted in his long apprenticeship (c. 1892 to 1905) to traditional methods of drawing and etching, especially in the use of crosshatched, paralleled, and speckled markings to build up a graphic image.[10] One can see this in his symbolist etched "inventions," such as *Meeting of Two Men, Each Supposing the Other to be of Higher Rank* (1903), in which tone and modeling were accomplished by rows of tiny marks. In 1908 and 1909 he expressively loosened such lines under the influence of Impressionism and Van Gogh.

Yet the lines were still dependent upon contour and appearances. By 1909 to 1911 Klee's lines began to take on a life of their own at the same time that he spoke of energy lines in his diary. Traditional chiaroscuro markings were allowed to capriciously wander on alternate sides of contour lines, as in *Caricature of a Piece of Furniture* (1910/15) (Fig. 2). Then, by 1913, under the influence of Cubism and Futurism, the fields of lines became more autonomous, as in *Night Plants in the Rain* (1913/178).

Klee next modified such lines to suggest invisible forces at work. In an early prototype, *Germinating Power of the Woods* (1917/29) (Fig. 3), ranges of parallel lines sweep in various directions, suggesting the movement of powerful forces; and in 1923 these lines took on a broken, scumbled appearance, as in *Cosmic Flora*, that suggests an appropriate source for invisible forces at work—that of iron filings aligned on a plate by the forces of a magnet. Such an experiment is ancient, going back to Roman times (Lucretius, who lived between 98 and 55 B.C.), but it only gained its significance in the nineteenth century with the work of Michael Faraday, James Clerk Maxwell, and Henrich Hertz. Faraday in the second quarter of the century used magnetized iron filings to suggest a picture for the *actual* field of force existing around a magnet or an electrode. He translated

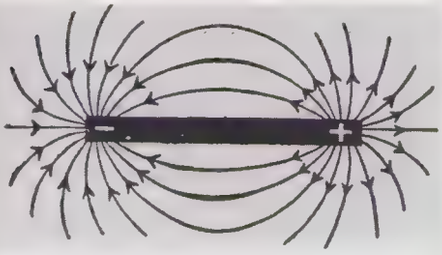


Fig. 4. Bar Magnet Showing Faraday's Lines of Force. From Einstein and Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York, 1938), p. 132.

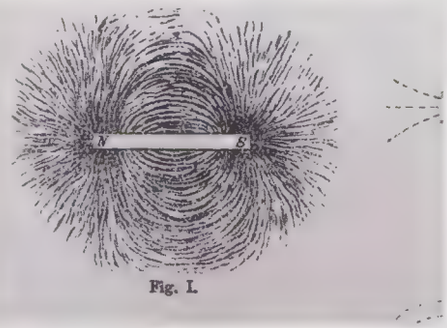


Fig. 5. Illustration of Magnetized Iron Filings. From E. Lecher (ed.), *Physik* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1925), p. 370.

Fig. 6. Giacomo Balla, Street Light, 1909. *Oil on canvas, 63¾ x 45¼". Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, Hillman Periodicals Purchase Fund.*

Fig. 7. Umberto Boccioni, Dynamism of a Cyclist, 1913. *Oil on canvas, 27½ x 37¼". Private Collection, Milan.*

this field into diagrammatic lines and called them "lines of force" (Fig. 4). Maxwell, starting from Faraday's work, established by 1873 (in his *Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism*) the mathematical formulae to describe this phenomenon, and Hertz in 1886 provided the experimental proof by propagating electric waves into the free space of a room and intercepting them by a wire loop receiver that picked up electric sparks out of the air.

The visual evidence is strong that Klee learned from the iron filings experiment. Compare an illustration from a German physics textbook contemporary to Klee's schooling (Fig. 5)[11] to his *Cosmic Flora;* the same is true in comparing an illustration from a physics text contemporary to his Bauhaus days.[12] Klee was certainly aware of this experiment, for during his Literarschule training (1894-98) he had taken a basic course in physics which had units on magnetism and electricity.[13] His school teachers were university trained and would have been aware of current theories. When Klee began to teach at the Bauhaus in the early 1920s he would have had the chance to become reacquainted with such ideas. There was a great interest at the Bauhaus in the basic sciences as a source for practical, visual, and philosophic wisdom. The 1921 "Statutes of the Bauhaus" called for lectures on the sciences as part of the curriculum,[14] in 1923 a local gymnasium teacher was contacted to teach mathematics and physics,[15] and by 1925 physics, mathematics, mechanics, and chemistry were all part of the basic curriculum.[16] Klee's close friend Kandinsky, also at the Bauhaus, began to consult science books by 1923 for examples of basic forms and structures to illustrate his theoretical work (published as *Point and Line to Plane* in 1926).[17] Klee himself was also consulting the sciences for the expansion of his teaching in 1923 and 1924 (for his "General System of pictorical media combined with nature study").[18] Klee did paint, as early as 1921, a work that referred specifically to magnetism, *Magnetic Apparatus for Plant Cultivation* (1921/33); however, this preceded his invention of the scumbled energy lines and showed a magnetic force by a dark blue watercolor aura that emanates from the strange plant cultivator. Scientist speakers were invited to the Bauhaus during the 1920s. Two of the most famous were Hans Driesch, the major proponent of vitalism, who spoke on "The Unknown" in 1925 and Wilhelm Ostwald, proponent of a philosophic "energetism," who lectured about his "Color Theory" in 1927.[19] Klee is known to have had lively discussions with not only visiting artists and musicians but with visiting scientists as well.[20]

The next question is whether Klee was interested in not only the visual motif of energy fields but in the concept of invisible energy as well. The significance of the question lies in the fact that nineteenth and early twentieth century physics had made the concept of energy and the energy field as real as (and to some, more fundamental than) the concept of matter. Einstein and Infeld wrote retrospectively in the 1930s that:

> A new reality was created . . . Slowly and by a struggle the field concept established itself a leading place in physics and has remained one of the basic physical concepts. The electromagnetic field is for the modern physicist, as real as the chair on which he sits.[21]

Before the field concept heat, electricity, and magnetism had been considered fluids (albeit imponderable)[22] and light, corpuscular (in part maintained in present theories), but the work of Faraday, Maxwell, and Hertz brought them under one set of laws and conceived of them as energy that could be propagated through space as electromagnetic waves.

This discovery of a nonmaterial reality had a great impact on the public. Hertz's experiment was demonstrated in lecture halls by the early 1890s and in 1895 Marconi invented the radio or "wireless," which was a verification of the new reality for the general public. Also, beginning in 1895 with the discovery of X-ray emissions by Röntgen and the ensuing work of J.J. Thompson and Ernest Rutherford, it was realized that the very building unit of our physical world, the atom, was not solid matter but an open structure of vast spaces and minute corpuscles, some conceived of as disembodied electric charges.

The next question is whether these new theories of energy fields and electromagnetic phenomena had an impact on Klee and his milieu. The answer is certainly yes. Klee, as mentioned, had spoken of light as energy in 1910. The Futurists in Italy by 1912 spoke in their manifesto of wishing to look to the "vivifying current of science," among other sources, to help deliver them from the academic tradition.[23] They wished to represent the dynamic sensations of modern life, such as sound, light, scent, also motion and conflict, and had already by 1909 begun to use Symbolist equivalents for these sensations, as in Balla's *Street-Light—Study of Light* (1909) (Fig. 6).[24] Then by 1912 they developed a new, more abstract metaphor to represent sensations and forces by energizing the Cubist facture. As in Boccioni's *Dynamism of a Cyclist* (1913) (Fig. 7), they set fields of autonomous lines in motion into various diagonal directions; they also cut through space with what Boccioni called "force-lines" or "force-lines-forms."[25] Boccioni was certainly drawing from Faraday's concept of lines of force for this both intellectually and visually.[26] The Futurists spoke of these "force-lines" and forms as a visual metaphor for almost any dynamic phenomenon—sensations, emotion, character, physical forces, the input of the observer—all interacting on the picture plane.[27] This was an effective layman's "kitchen sink" use of a new idea, metaphorical rather than technical. We can see this in *Dynamism of a Cyclist,* in which the long "lines of force" are technically more like "vectors," which in physics indicate the

Fig. 8. Kasimir Malevich, Suprematist Composition Expressing Magnetic Attraction, 1911. *Present whereabouts unknown.*

Fig. 9. Kasimir Malevich, Suprematist Composition Expressing the Feeling of the Wireless Telegraph, 1915. *Present whereabouts unknown.*

Fig. 10. Paul Klee, Plants and Stars, 1924. *Ink on paper, 7¼ x 10¼". Courtesy The Norton Simon Museum of Art at Pasadena, The Blue Four-Galka Scheyer Collection.*

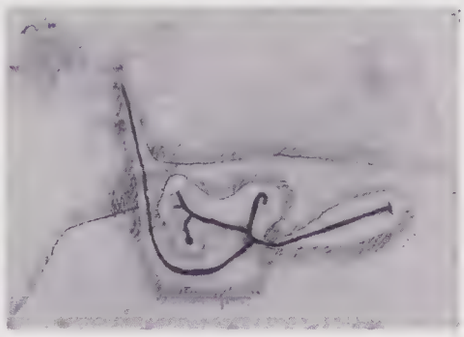


Fig. 11. Paul Klee, Germination, 1937. *Pencil on paper. Collection Felix Klee, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, Paris, 1977.*

magnitude and direction of a force, a displacement, or a velocity by an arrow of appropriate length and direction. In Boccioni's painting his long lines could suggest any or all three of these dynamic phenomena—the forces, displacement and velocity—of a cyclist in motion. A closer analogy to fields of forces are the diagonal waves of tiny parallel strokes.

Klee had encountered both the Futurist theories and paintings in Munich at the Galerie Thannhauser in 1912, exclaiming a "Holy Laocoön!!" in his diary, but clearly admiring their work.[28] His interest in invisible forces was certainly reinforced by the note that Kandinsky and Marc took of modern physics at the same time. Kandinsky "was struck with terrific impact" by the fact that the atom was not solid matter.[29] Instead, as he noted in 1911, the concept of matter was being replaced by the "theory of electrons, that is of waves in motion."[30] Franz Marc believed that "the art to come will give form to our scientific convictions."[31] Rather than looking at nature's outward forms, the artist should build a new form from within, according to the new knowledge. By 1913, Marc sought pure dynamic forms under the impact of discoveries in physics, non-Euclidean mathematics, and analytic chemistry, according to Lankheit.[32] It is not surprising that Marc and the more philosophical of the German artists were looking to science for the new knowledge. The most prominent scientists of the turn of the century put their minds to not only their empirical work but also to the philosophical implications of the new scientific advances. Many of them—Haeckel, Driesch, Mach, Ostwald, and others—wrote philosophical works and lectured widely about their ideas.[33]

The Russian Constructivists, Gabo, Pevsner, and Malevich, whose ideas were available at the Bauhaus by 1921,[34] were also interested in representing invisible physical forces. Gabo and Pevsner wrote in 1920 of considering line as the direction and rhythm of static forces within the object.[35] Malevich drew a "Suprematist composition expressing magnetic attraction" in 1911 and one in 1915 "expressing the feeling of the wireless telegraph"[36] (Figs. 8 and 9). Although Malevich did not use lines of force in either work, he did use the Morse code dot-dash to visualize invisible telegraphic messages passing through the air.

Klee used his own energy forms starting in 1923. He used them to render organic rather than technological themes, creating a whole realm of otherworldly flora, such as *Cosmic Flora* (1923/176), *Strange Garden* (1923/160), and *Plants and Stars* (1924/29). In *Plants and Stars* (Fig. 10) the terrestrial plants and heavenly stars are analogous beings emanating quivering energy lines. The plants are constrained by gravity to the horizon, while the heavenly bodies float freely above. Both have the simplicity of the seed which has just begun to sprout. The seed, to Klee, was "an energy center charged to the highest degree."[37] We see this in his later drawing, *Germination* (1937/N. 3) (Fig. 11), in which the latent energy of the seed has been loosened as it strikes root and sends up a sprout.[38] The seed was analogous to the point, for Klee, and the point could embody "the cosmogenetic moment . . . the whole concept of beginning. Suns, radiation, rotation, explosion, movements of fireworks, sheaves,"[39] i.e., synonymous dynamic events throughout the universe.

Out of his understanding of natural law, Klee could create new dispositions of the earthly and heavenly. His *Landscape with Full Moon and Quarter Moon* of 1923 (Fig. 12) shows energized feathery vegetation extending into cosmic space attracted to heavenly bodies by long glowing lines of force. In *Ad Marginem* (1930/210) (Fig. 13), the sun at the center pulses with an expanding red light and tiny energy lines. The pulse beat is picked up by the eye as the red ball changes position within the open space, due to apparent perceptual movement.[40] The earthly realm wraps around the sun, defying its own proper center of gravity.[41]

Even abstract signs, for Klee, could grow and give off fields of prickly energy. Triangles, squares, x's, and eyes create strange sign and shape alphabets animated with self-generated vitalism, as in *Growth under the Half Moon* (1924/59) (Fig. 14), and also in *Christmas Picture 1B* (1923/178), *Landscapely-physiognomic* (1925/U. 4), and *March Flora* (1926/Y. 7). Ghosts as well could materialize out of a shimmering energy field (Fig. 15).

Klee wrote that "it is the energy-charged creative force that forms the basic life content . . . It invests matter with life, sets it into motion by a definite order . . ."[42] This concept of a primal creative force within the universe stems from the German Romantics. The early nineteenth century natural philosopher Friedrich von Schelling, who greatly influenced the Romantic Movement and whose writings Klee certainly knew,[43] wrote that the artist should seek "the Holy, every-creative original energy of the world, which generates and busily evolves all things out of itself."[44] He believed that the artist should resonate with this creative energy and recognize the relation of the "formative science in nature and art."

Although Klee inherited this concept of an energy-charged creative force from the German Romantic tradition, he translated it into twentieth century terms as a result of the impact of contemporary physics. What was *new* was Klee's willingness and ability to represent as visual reality the abstract energies themselves.

1. Klee gave these lectures from 29 February 1924 through 2 July 1924. His full title was "Pictorial Mechanics or Theory of Style" (Bildnerische Mechanik oder Stillehre). The original handwritten text as well as a German typescript taken from the original are in the collection of the Paul Klee Stiftung, Bern, Switzerland.
2. Newton's law as quoted in a standard physics text contemporary to Klee,

Fig. 12. Paul Klee, Landscape with Full Moon and Quarter Moon, 1923. *Watercolor on chalk-primed board. 4½ x 11¾". Collection Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Saidenberg, New York.*

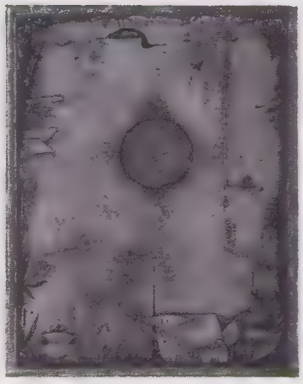


Fig. 13. Paul Klee, Ad Marginem, 1930. *Watercolor on board, 18¼ x 14". Courtesy Kunstmuseum, Basle. Copyright SPADEM, Paris, 1977.*

Fig. 14. Paul Klee, Growth under the Half Moon, 1924. *9 x 6¼". Courtesy The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jan Mitchell, New York.*

Fig. 15. Paul Klee, Materialized Ghosts, 1923. *Watercolor on paper, mounted on board, 14¾ x 10". Courtesy Knoll House Collection, Pasadena, California.*

Leopold Pfaundler, *Müller-Pouillet's Lehrbuch der Physik and Meteorologie,* 10th revised and expanded edition (Braunschweig, 1906), 1:107. For further on this question of Klee's "Pictorial Mechanics" and Newton, see the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by Sara Henry, "Paul Klee, Nature, and Modern Science, the 1920s," (University of California, Berkeley, November, 1976), pp. 172-76.

3. Pictorial Mechanics, lecture of 12 February 1924.

4. *Paul Klee Notebooks,* ed. Jürg Spiller, Vol. 1: *The Thinking Eye* (New York, 1961), pp. 274-79 and p. 291; and Vol. 2: *Nature of Nature* (New York, 1973), pp. 44-51.

5. The parallelogram of force, vectors, and the trajectory are all illustrated or discussed in *Thinking Eye,* pp. 409-13.

6. *Thinking Eye,* p. 94.

7. *Diary,* 885.

8. Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee* (New York, 1956), p. 3. Klee called them "grace notes" or "flourishes," suggesting musical analogy to the way he used them as accompanying ornamental notes to major melody lines.

9. Diagrams in Klee, *Thinking Eye,* pp. 50-51. Other related diagrams created by the editor of Klee's teachings, Jürg Spiller, are found in *Thinking Eye,* p. 94 and *Nature of Nature,* p. 257.

10. Geelhaar (*Paul Klee and the Bauhaus,* p. 59) suggests the source in Klee's early landscape drawings of 1897-98. I would broaden this to include all of his early works in a traditional drawing style from 1892 through 1905. Dr. von Walterskirchen and Jürgen Glaesemer at the Paul-Klee Stiftung in Bern suggested the print source to the author in fall 1972.

11. The textbook contemporary to Klee's schooling is Leopold Pflaundler, *Müller-Pouillet's Lehrbuch der Physik and Meteorologie,* 9th revised and expanded edition (Braunschweig, 1888-1890), 3:91.

12. E. Lecher, ed., *Physik* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1925), p. 370. This book is from the series "Kultur der Gegenwart" that Kandinsky was consulting for his work; see note 17. This 1925 edition is a revised and expanded version of an earlier 1914 edition.

13. From a photocopy obtained from the Bern city Gymnasium of the curriculum for all grades of the Literarschule for the school year 1894-95.

14. "The Statutes of the Staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar," pamphlet, published in January 1921, reprinted in Hans M. Wingler, *The Bauhaus* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), p. 45.

15. Dr. Ackermann was contacted to lecture on math and physics for the winter of 1923. His name appears in the Bauhaus minutes of 25 March 1923 at the Bauhaus-Archive in Berlin, although there is no reference to whether he was actually taken on. This information is from correspondence with Marcel Franciscono, Bauhaus scholar, 17 April 1975.

16. From "Work Plan for the Preliminary Course," printed sheet, no date (1925-1926), Bauhaus Dessau. Wingler notes that this listed "program for the basic course was binding during the first years at Dessau. Later it was modified in some of its points." Reprinted in Wingler, *The Bauhaus,* p. 109.

17. Kandinsky used such illustrations as a microscopic cross section of a rat's muscle and a telephoto of a spiral nebula in his *Point and Line to Plane,* originally published as *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche* (Munich, 1926). He drew his illustrations in part from the science books of an encyclopedic series of monographs covering modern culture called "Kultur der Gegenwart."

18. Klee's "General System . . ." has been published as vol. 2 of *Paul Klee Notebooks, The Nature of Nature* (New York, 1973).

19. Information from Ise Gropius, letter to the author 8 May 1977. Ostwald's philosophy of energetism or energetic monism is interesting as one more factor in Klee's milieu. Ostwald's basic concepts, however, differ from Klee's organic, vitalist point of view. Ostwald believed that energy is the substrate of all phenomena and that all observable changes can be interpreted as transformation of one kind of energy into another. Ostwald devoted much time to propagating his views on monism. He founded the pantheistically oriented League of German Monists in 1904 and in 1907 began to publish his series of Monist Sunday Sermons.

20. Grohmann, *Klee,* p. 67.

21. Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York, 1938), p. 151.

22. Heat, magnetism, electricity, and even light before the first quarter of the nineteenth century were explained in reference to fluids, but fluids without weight, i.e., imponderable.

23. Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto," 11 April 1910, originally published as a pamphlet in Milan, English translation reprinted in Joshua C. Taylor, "Futurism," in Herschel B. Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley, 1968), p. 290.

24. Other early Futurist paintings of sensations are for scent, Russolo, *Perfume,* 1909-1910; for sound, Russolo, *Music,* 1911; and for motion and conflict, Carrà, *Funeral of the Anarchist Galli,* 1910-11.

25. According to Marianne Martin, *Futurist Art and Theory, 1909-1915* (Oxford, 1968), p. 111, note 1: "The term *lignes-forces* was used for the first time in the painter's [Boccioni's] preface to the Bernheim-Jeune catalogue of 1912, 8. It has been translated as lines of force, force-lines, and line/force." Boccioni also wrote that: "We conceive . . . the object as a nucleus (centripetal construction) from which the forces (force-lines-forms) which define it in the ambience (centrifugal construction) depart, and thus determine its essential character." This is from the *Pittura scultura futuriste (dinamismo plastico)* (Milan, 1914), quoted in Martin, *Futurist Art,* pp. 157-158.

Reynar Banham aptly describes Boccioni's ideas as a "field theory of aesthetic space . . . a space which exists as a field of force or influence radiatating from the geometric center of the object which gives rise to it." [Reynar Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age,* New York, 1967, p. 112.]

26. Martin, *Futurist Art,* p. 111, confirms my belief on this matter.

27. "Exhibitors to the Public," catalogue introduction for the exhibition that traveled throughout Europe in 1912, reprinted in English in Taylor, "Futurism," in Chipp, *Theories,* p. 294.

28. *Diary,* 916.

29. Wassily Kandinsky, *Wassily Kandinsky Memorial* (New York, 1945), p. 55, quoted in Peter Selz, *German Expressionist Painting* (Berkeley, 1957), p. 224.

30. *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (New York, c. 1947, reprint 1964), p. 32. The learning of these new theories helped to reinforce Kandinsky's rejection of the material and materialism for the spiritual. Germany had had a strong movement of philosophic materialism in the 19th century based on the writings of Moleschott, Vogt, and Büchner and had found a new ally in the monism of Ernst Haeckel toward the end of the century.

31. *Briefe, Aufzeichnungen und Aphorismen,* I, 126-32, no. 35, English translation in Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art,* p. 180.

32. Klaus Lankheit, *Franz Marc* (Berlin, 1950), p. 47.

33. Haeckel's book *Die Welträthsel* (Bonn, 1899), English translation, *The Riddle of the Universe* (New York and London, 1901), was a best seller. Driesch wrote at least 21 books and 100 articles on philosophic issues between 1895 and 1940. For Ostwald, see note 19. Mach's contribution was in the philosophy of science between 1893 and 1905.

34. Schlemmer, who came to the Bauhaus in 1921, was aware of the Russian artistic events as early as 1919 [letter of 1919 found in Tut Schlemmer, ed., *The Letters and Diaries of Oskar Schlemmer* (Middletown, Conn., 1972), p. 64]. Also by 1921 Gabo and Pevsner were in Berlin; El Lissitzky had been sent to Berlin with instructions to establish contacts with the German artists; and Iwani Puni, a Russian Constructivist, had an exhibition at Der Sturm. In 1922 there was a large exhibition of Russian art in Berlin; El Lissitzky started a Constructivist periodical, *Veschch,* which was published in German, English, and Russian; and many of the Constructivist and Dada avant-garde met in Weimar, then traveled to Hannover and Dusseldorf for the Dusseldorf Congress of Progressive Artists. With the appointments of Kandinsky in 1922 and Moholy-Nagy in 1923 to the Bauhaus, the link with the Constructivist ideas was direct.

35. Moscow, 5 August 1920, English translation in Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art,* p. 329.

36. Kazimir Malevich, *The Non-objective World* (Chicago, 1959), pp. 87 and 83, originally published as Vol. II of the Bauhaus books (Munich, 1927).

37. Lecture— Monday, November 1923, in *Nature of Nature,* p. 29.

38. See lecture of 5 November 1923, *The Nature of Nature,* pp. 25 and 29. Other paintings by Klee that show plant growth and energy are: *Plants Lying in Wait* (1925/35), *Spiral Blossoms* (1926/R2), *Growth on Stone* (1929/Z8), and *Botanical Theater* (1924-34/U19.) For a discussion of the latter painting, see especially Max Huggler, *Paul Klee* (Frauenfeld and Stuttgart, 1969), pp. 81-86.

39. *Thinking Eye,* p. 22.

40. There are several theories for illusions of movement; see R.L. Gregory, *Eye and Brain* (New York, 1966), pp. 99-115.

41. Klee was quite interested in effects of gravity; see "Pictorial Mechanics," lecture of 29 February 1924. He knowingly would contradict gravity in his work.

42. *Nature of Nature,* p. 293.

43. A study of Schelling was basic to German education in Klee's time

44. English translation from "Über das Verhaltnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur" in Lorenz Eitner, *Neoclassicism and Romanticism, 1750-1850,* vol. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970), pp. 43-47.

PAUL KLEE IN THE BAUHAUS: THE ARTIST AS LAWGIVER

MARCEL FRANCISCONO

Anomalous among the Bauhaus instructors, inactive in matters of school policy, and unresponsive to many of the Bauhaus disciplines, Klee seemed to use the Bauhaus for private devotional ends—an eremite rather than one of the clerks regular.

Fig. 1. Paul Klee, Scene with the Running Man, 1925. *Ink on paper, 8 5/8 x 11¼". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, 1977.*

Fig. 2. Paul Klee, A Leaf from the Book of Cities, 1928. *Sgraffito on chalk ground on paper and wood, 16½ x 12½". Courtesy Oeffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel.* ▼

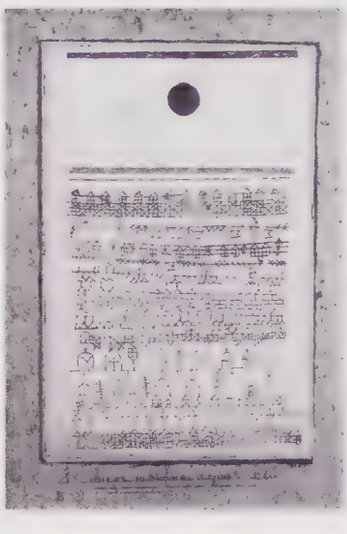


Fig. 3. Paul Klee, Composition with Windows, 1919. *Oil and ink on cardboard, 19¾ x 15". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, 1977.*

A question continues to hang over a major portion of Paul Klee's career: what was he doing in the Bauhaus? It does not have to be asked in the obvious sense it might have been asked a generation ago, before the extraordinary range and detail of Klee's lecture notes became known.[1] We also know enough now about the character of the early Bauhaus to make it, if not exactly self-evident, at least more understandable why an artist as obviously fanciful as Klee then seemed to be should have been hired by a school ostensibly devoted to architecture and the practical arts of design.[2]

Klee seemed indeed a special case. His reputation after the war had suddenly become one of the brightest in Germany. His Creative Credo, published in 1920, the year he was formally invited to teach at the Bauhaus, showed a mind not only able to reflect intelligently on art but able—so it seemed—to lay out its constituent parts while managing, remarkably, to convey a sense of the imaginative whole.[3] Besides, it did no harm to Klee's account that his work should be praised effusively in print by Gropius' close friend, the architectural critic Adolf Behne, who announced it as a greeting from Paul Scheerbart's world.[4] That ironic fantasist, with his visions of an extravagant architecture in the service of a non-materialistic realm of perfect harmony, had brought an influential coterie of young German architects under his sway during the war and the November Revolution. One of the most fervid among them was Gropius, and it must have weighed heavily in Klee's favor that he seemed to share something of Scheerbart's vision.

In fact, Jürgen Glaesemer has recently published evidence that Klee was far more of a mind with Gropius than anybody had suspected. In May 1919, even before he was sounded out by Oskar Schlemmer to teach in the Stuttgart Academy, Klee, who was then living in Munich, sent Alfred Kubin his conception of a new kind of art school which comes very close to Gropius' idea of the Bauhaus as it appears in his proclamation of 1919. The letter reveals an unknown side of Klee's character. It is the only piece of writing published so far—including his diaries—in which he voices any social and political convictions in other than the indirect terms of their effects on him. Writing of the hopes for art that had been offered by the aborted *Räterepublik* in Munich, Klee comments:

> Of course an extremely individualistic art can't be enjoyed collectively; it's a capitalist luxury. But even so, we are more than curiosities for rich snobs. And whatever there is in us that is somehow striving to get beyond that to eternal values would be encouraged rather than not by the communist community. The fertilizing effect of our example would take place on a broader basis by a different route. As an ideal experimental station, we would not be training original creators. . .(who in that case wouldn't be true creators but only their masks. . .); we would instead pass the results of our creative efforts on to the people as a whole. This new art could then permeate the handicrafts and give rise to a great revival. For there would be no more academies but only art schools for handworkers. . . .My dear Kubin, maybe this doesn't interest you very much, but it has been preoccupying me a great deal.[5]

One would like to know more about the circumstances prompting these sentiments. Jürgen Glaesemer may be right when he suggests that they came out of conversations with the painter Lech, whose studio was in the same building in the Werneckstrasse as Klee's and who used it that spring to hide the radical poet, Ernst Toller, from the police.[6] He must also, surely, have read some of the numerous programs for art and art education being published early that year by artists' groups all over Germany, including those of the Arbeitsrat für Kunst, of which Gropius was a director, and the Novembergruppe. It is even possible that he saw a copy of the Bauhaus proclamation itself, which had been printed as a flyer a month or so before he wrote his letter.

Whatever the facts, it is valuable to have this evidence that Klee, too, was caught up in the spirit of the November Revolution. There has always been something unsatisfying in

what we knew of his commitment to the Bauhaus. The least vocal of any artist in the school, refusing in 1926 to take a temporary salary cut that might help bail it out of its financial difficulties, increasingly tired of the routine of teaching as the years went by, Klee seemed to use the Bauhaus for private devotional ends—an eremite rather than one of the clerks regular.[7]

His letter to Kubin goes some way toward correcting this picture, but there is still something unresolved about his presence in the Bauhaus. We know almost nothing about his views on school matters: scarcely a memorandum, scarcely a single one of the surviving minutes of the faculty meetings, records his position in the numberless disputes over principle that enlivened tenure in the Bauhaus. He was of minor importance as a master in the shops, to judge from the objects made under him. His activity was confined in Weimar to the least viable of them—to the bookbindery and later to the relatively unproductive stained glass workshop. The former under his direction turned out little more than imitation Klees on the covers of books, the latter was very largely under Josef Albers' leadership in artistic as well as technical matters.[8] Klee's energy and genius as a Form Master went rather into his regular lectures on the mechanics of picture making.

The notes for those lectures constitute the most subtle and elaborate body of precepts and analysis to come from an artist in this century. Ten years of teaching resulted in over 3,300 pages of notes, drawings, and diagrams, many directly for use in his lectures, a great number, though based on his lectures, designed for an announced treatise on picture making.[9] In sheer volume they have been approached, not to say surpassed, by few works of their kind at any time. But the very scope of Klee's achievement as a theoretician raises questions. It puts into relief as little else does the instability inherent in the union between modern abstract art and technics attempted in the Bauhaus, and beyond that, the wider tension felt to a greater or lesser degree throughout the whole history of the Bauhaus between the idea of art as inspiration and art as rational process.

Except perhaps for his lectures on color, which are the less original part of his teaching, Klee's lectures had little or no direct relationship to the work of the shops; and this would seem to include his lectures of the late '20s to the weaving classes. Unlike the basic design courses taught by Itten, Albers, and Moholy-Nagy, which were rudimentary and general enough to be applicable to a variety of tasks, Klee's lessons in the principles of art were not easily transferred to areas outside of painting. Despite this, his lectures, like Schlemmer's on "Man" in Dessau and Kandinsky's on color and analytic drawing, were compulsory and remained so even under the directorship of Hannes Meyer, who had little use for the painters and saw little place for aesthetics in architectural design.[10] Their salience in the Bauhaus curriculum was justified on the more general ground of artistic health. The conviction in the Bauhaus was strong, at least among the painters, that the analytical frame of mind and the disciplined eye developed in the theory courses could be carried over to the work of designing, even if the specific details of that teaching might themselves not always be of direct value. Thus, in 1926 Kandinsky justified the teaching of painting in the Bauhaus on two grounds. It served students who wanted to be painters, but it also taught a "principle of organization," the basic laws (*Gesetzmässigkeit*) by means of which the student can achieve a synthesis even outside of painting.[11] Klee was of the same opinion. At the beginning of a lecture of 1924 he tried to bring his students' minds back from the Christmas holidays just past by reminding them that "our chief aim is not to make painters and draftsmen out of you. But we still all have to draw and do some painting, because these activities force us into contact with principles of order *(Gesetzmässigkeiten).*"[12] In short, Klee's lectures were held by him to be goods in themselves, rather like mathematics and Latin whose study has traditionally been defended as a general discipline for the mind.

Whether the mind is in fact like a muscle, which gains general strength from specific exercise, has often been debated without, as far as I know, any definite conclusion. It may well be true. Whatever the case, Klee's students surely had their imaginations exercised by his classes. Beyond that, he communicated a mentality that exhaustively sought to explore and order the materials of art. Klee's lectures were like Albers' preliminary course in one respect: they taught a restriction of means, a functional way of thinking about art by which design is to be understood as the rigorous exploitation of a limited number of forms. This creative habit is no small virtue for designers, and the influence of Klee in developing it must have been considerable. But by its nature that influence is hard to assess, and it is clearly in a different category from the teaching of methods and techniques intended for direct application outside the fine arts, as were the exercises presented in the various basic design courses. It is hard to accept Klee's, and what seems to have been the general Bauhaus conviction, that fundamentals of art were being taught by such courses as his and Kandinsky's that could be directly turned to the practice of architecture and design.

But what about the would-be painters at the Bauhaus? What kind of laws or principles of order did Klee teach them? The cumulative effect of reading his published notes is overwhelming. From a seemingly endless stream of methodically presented examples and precepts, students could learn how to work up the simplest formal elements into pictures ranging from elementarist abstraction to the loftiest and most recondite metaphysical statements. But granting the intention, whether it was easy to make Klee's method one's own is another matter.

Herbert Read greeted the publication of the first volume of Klee's theoretical writings with this extraordinary accolade: "*[It]* is the most complete presentation of the principles of design ever made by a modern artist—it constitutes the Principia Aesthetica of a new era of art, in which Klee occupies a position comparable to Newton's in the realm of physics."[13] The comparison to the *Principia Mathematica* of Russell, as well as of Newton, is not lost; but those comparisons are not without their danger, for if besides acknowledging the sheer scope and virtuosity of Klee's instruction they were meant to indicate its establishment of an objective language of art as they seem to do, they also point up all too readily the fact that even the *summae* of hard-headed reason are subject to revision and supersession, much more the analyses of artists, however detailed and objective they may seem to be.

Klee's pictorial mechanics is only apparently objective. He made constant comparison in his lectures to music, and while he himself was careful not to push the analogy between design theory and music theory too far, that comparison has often been made. Goethe's famous call for a *Generalbass*—a thorough-bass or harmonic theory—of art runs through the pictorial thinking of the early part of the century. It was echoed by classicizing artists as otherwise dissimilar as Adolf Hoelzel and Severini, used as an epigraph in *De Stijl,* and emblazoned on a page by itself in the Blaue Reiter Almanac.[14] Klee's diagrams and procedures, including those few excerpts from his lectures published by the Bauhaus in 1925 as the *Pedagogical Sketchbook,* do add up to something one might loosely call a thorough-bass of painting; but the analogy with music is more misleading than not, since unlike the classical and preclassical musical principles it alludes to, Klee's elements are not by and large premises or rules upon which the compositions of others can easily be built without accommodating to Klee's own particular style.

It is not just that Klee's notebooks are a rationalization of his own experience as an artist. That in itself does not have to stand in the way of a theory's wider assimilation. It is rather that the procedures he taught were at once too detailed in form and too general in content to be adopted without the metaphorical language that was their constant accompaniment in his lectures. That language cannot be regarded as the superstructure of a *Generalbass* of art. It is, if anything, the other way around: it is for the sake of their content, of the analogies Klee drew that the fundamentals were created. To take a simple example from one of Klee's earliest lectures, it is probably useful to a beginning student to know that in isolation a line with two free ends will generally read as a more active form than a line that joins itself to form a closed plane, and that this in turn is more active than the same plane filled in solid. Klee called these active, medial, and passive forms.[15] But how we actually read a

Fig. 4. Paul Klee, In the Current Six Thresholds, 1929. *Tempera and oil on canvas, 17 x 17". Courtesy Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.*

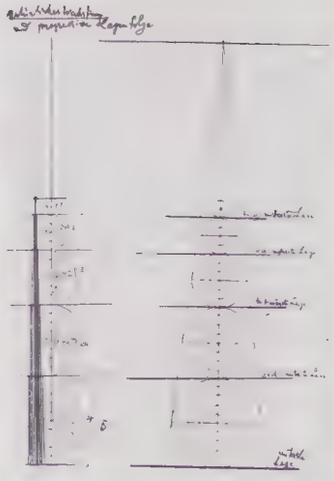


Fig. 5. Paul Klee, Natural Growth and the Progressive Sequence of Layers, reprinted with permission of the publishers from Paul Klee, *Unendliche Naturgeschichte,* Schwabe and Co., Basel, 1970, p. 123.

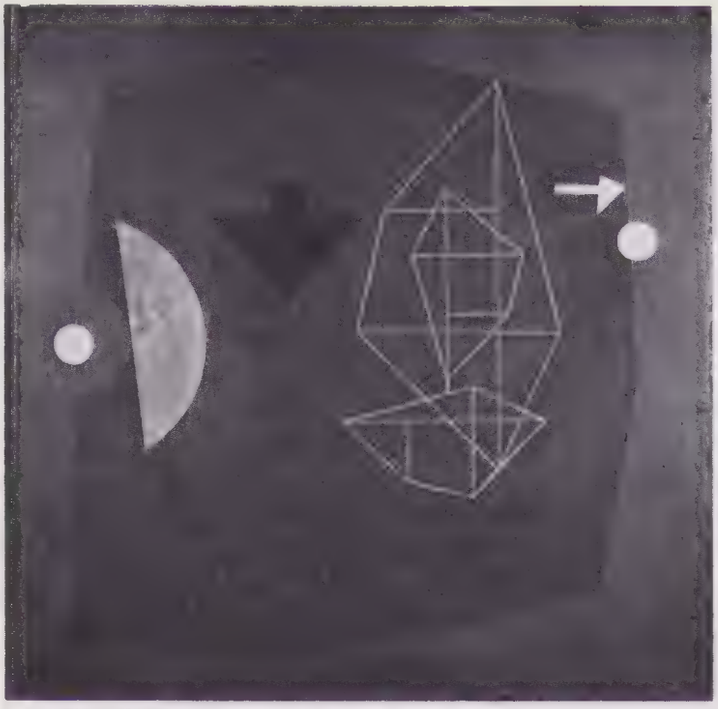


Fig. 6. Paul Klee, Possibilities at Sea, 1932. *Oil and sand on canvas, 38¼ x 37½". Courtesy The Norton Simon Museum at Pasadena, Blue Four Galka Scheyer Collection.*

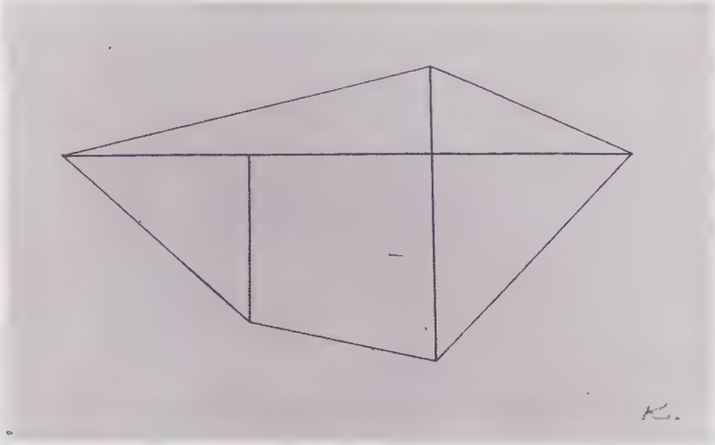


Fig. 7. Paul Klee, Model 7a (Three Sticks and a Rubberband), 1931. *Ink on paper, 8¼ x 13". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, 1977.*

movement in a picture, or even whether we read it as movement at all—whether a closed form, for instance, is to make an effect as an encircling line or as a plane—clearly depends on its context, either the pictorial context or a verbal explanation in the title of what we ought to expect.

What this amounts to is that Klee's elements depend to a very large extent on the physical interpretation he gave them. It is a mistake to take Klee too seriously when he explains how he begins with an abstract motif and only afterward ("sooner or later") allows associations to enter the work if they occur to him.[16] Aside from the consideration that many of his pictures must obviously have been started with a more or less specific image or idea in mind, his basic motifs or procedures themselves tend to be carriers of meaning. At the very least they assume a metaphorical function, becoming landscapes, architecture, figures, locomotion, the movement of fate, the moment they are given spatial definition. The basket-weave motif of the mid Twenties to early Thirties, the geometric cells that he typically uses for architecture—these tiny motifs have no life of their own as forms; they can hardly be set down without a prior notion of what they are going to construct (Figs. 1 and 2).

Klee's symbolic way of thinking about form is so ingrained that he is incapable of presenting the most commonplace piece of classroom information without turning it into an occasion for speculative allusion. His lecture of November 28, 1921 introduces perspective with two diagrams illustrating the familiar illusion of converging railroad tracks. The first has them meeting conventionally at the horizon line, the second shows them crossing each other above (or beyond) the horizon. Klee's explanation is: "Let's imagine two railroad tracks. Now, there is something very misleading about his. These lines certainly do diverge! Rails that keep moving farther apart—that'll end in a fine derailment indeed! Or if one assumes the opposite direction. Rails that are going to cross on the other side are almost more disquieting. . .We have suddenly jumped from the planar to the spatial realm. . .We are doing perspective."[17] This is only a slight piece of whimsy, but it has the immediate consequence of transporting us from the station point of observer outside the picture space to a point of infinite remove at the horizon, within the picture itself; and even more than that, of allowing us at once to use the perspective diagram as a device for representing or symbolizing a transcendent realm, beyond the horizon, as it were (Klee's word, "jenseits" has within it the mystical sense of The Beyond).

The dependence of Klee's elements on this sort of symbolic allusion leads to a second reason, besides their highly personal nature, why Klee's pictorial theories are not strictly comparable to musical theory. While they are obviously distillations of the same artistic mind that painted the pictures, they form a self-sufficient body of ideas and images, parallel to the pictures but to a very great extent independent of them. Unlike musical theory in its relation to composition, they can neither be derived from Klee's pictures nor help to any significant degree in explaining their structure or meaning.[18] The point can perhaps be made with a painting Klee himself used in his lectures to illustrate active, medial, and passive forms (Fig. 3).[19] *Composition with Windows* of 1919 shows all three, but it is obvious that a great many pictures by a great many artists would do as well. Indeed, virtually every picture ever made makes use of distinctions between active and passive forms if we choose to read them that way. *Composition with Windows* is not "about" active, medial, and passive forms the way it can meaningfully (though incompletely) be said that a sonata by Haydn is "about" a regulated progression of harmonies. In Klee's case, the imagery of a picture and its overall structure both intervene to control its meaning.

It is true that from 1924 onward Klee's pictures often show the kinds of regular systems of order illustrated in his classes. In Klee's painting, *In the Current Six Thresholds* (*In der Strömung sechs Schwellen*) of 1929, each band divides in two as it moves leftward (cf. Figs. 4 and 5). *Possibilities at Sea* (*Mögliches auf See*) of 1932 reuses a ruled construction of the previous year that appears in a number of what Klee calls kinetic variations (Figs. 6 and 7). These paintings are in some sense about order, regular progression, balance, and the

counterweight of forces.[20] But not from them any more than from his other pictures can one infer the precise fundamentals Klee proposed for art; nor, conversely, can one understand from his principles how or why they were put together as they were or what they mean. (*Possibilities at Sea* simply uses the earlier construction as an image.) Unlike Kandinsky's published theories, *Point and Line to Plane,* which present what are referred to throughout as the basic laws of composition, Klee's notebooks are not intended to show the principles of composition but its prior conditions—a compendium of rightly conceived motifs rather than a conception of pictorial space and its interrelationship with forms.[21] The real parallel to Klee's fundamentals is not harmonic theory but an elaborate, more or less orderly body of metaphors and analogies. They are used by the poet, they add up to a certain view of things, but they do not tell us what a particular poem is about or how it was made.

That Klee's doctrines are a highly personal poetics and not a scientific treatise is emphasized by Argan in his preface to the English edition of Klee's notebooks,[22] but the notion implicit in Read's comparison to Newton that they add up in some sense to a science of art has been hard to dispel. Karl-Heinz Hüter has recently characterized them as "giving a scientific basis to the creative process to the extent that it is amenable to scientific-analytical methods."[23] There are three conceivable reasons for calling Klee's or any artistic doctrine scientific: it makes extensive reference to scientific data or it is based, however personal, on some kind of objective (i.e., generally accepted) principle—physical, mathematical, psychological, aesthetic—or else, while not scientific by the strict standards of the experimental sciences, it nevertheless has something of the methodicalness of science and its analytical rigor—the science of the scholar rather than of the physicist. To what extent is any of this true of Klee?

He was plainly interested in scientific knowledge. He kept boxes of biological specimens of all kinds—seed pods, shells, coral, leaves[24]; he filled his lectures with descriptions of the regularities of nature and the phenomena of physics and biology. Scholars have begun to investigate this interest, most notably Marianne Teuber, who has proposed the influence in his work of forms and diagrams—optical illusions and the like—taken from the psychology of perception and Gestalt psychology, both of which she convincingly shows he was acquainted with.[25] But the use of data in this sense is hardly enough by itself to give Klee's teachings the cachet of science. What the sciences meant for Klee still needs a detailed answer. The question presents itself most insistently with respect to the importance quantification assumed in his theories. Those remarkable geometric diagrams drawn with straight edge and compass by Klee in his last years in the Bauhaus have yet to be studied. He used some of them in his lectures to the weaving classes in Dessau, as we know from the published class notes of his students.[26] If, as Huggler believes, most of them were in fact intended for a vast, aborted treatise, their presence by the scores and their seemingly obsessive precision become more understandable, but they themselves remain hardly less puzzling. They seem to have only a remote bearing on his actual pictures, and their elaborateness goes beyond any reasonable pedagogical need. Far from making him into a kind of scientist in art, Klee's preoccupation with number often suggests far more the activity of a numerologist (Fig. 8). Much, if not all, of Klee's mathematics seems to be merely analogy or metaphor, used to express or symbolize rather than to establish order.

It is not yet possible to trace the evolution of Klee's thinking in detail. A large part of his notes is undated, and only portions of them have been published. He was plainly affected by the emphasis in the Bauhaus, especially in Dessau, on rational process and structurally economical methods of work. One can find the same appeal to measure and objective knowledge in Gropius' speeches from 1924 on.[27] Klee's work, too, reflects this preoccupation, in the increasing exactness of his pictures and especially in the way he restricts them by letting a limited number of forms or modes of operation generate the entire work (Figs. 1, 2, and 4). Klee's frame of mind in the late '20s is summarized in his essay written for the Bauhaus journal in 1928, "Exact Experimentation in the Realm of Art."[28] It might be called a scherzo on the familiar Bauhaus theme that art cannot be taught, but only certain principles of it, without which there could be no art but which in themselves do not make art. Klee's measured justification for theory is fitted between two occurrences of a rather more ironic motif in which intuition gains the final victory over reason, but the emphasis is nevertheless unmistakably on the latter.

There is no doubt Klee believed that a fundamental objective principle lay behind his teaching, that he had indeed found an (or the) essential basis of art—he had been occupied with the idea of laws in art since his earliest years.[29] But whether that basis involved primarily laws of art or laws of nature was not made clear by him. On the contrary, his vagueness was essential to his purpose, for it is precisely in obscuring the distance between artistic procedures and natural processes that the value of his method lay for him. Christian Geelhaar has rightly observed that "it is relatively easy to find points of contact" between the writings of Klee and those of Kandinsky in the Bauhaus.[30] The broad organization of Kandinsky's *Point and Line to Plane* may itself have been influenced by Klee's similar and earlier introductory progression in his course from point to line to plane (though this is a traditional introductory formula in "scientific" treatises on art first used by Alberti in emulation of Euclid and also used in 1918 by Georges Vantongerloo in *De Stijl*[31]). But comparisons between Klee and Kandinsky only serve to underline the distinctive analogical nature of Klee's thinking.

The air of science is really stronger in *Point and Line to Plane.* Kandinsky's schematic manner of presentation and his tone of absolute certainty, without speculation or qualification, make the basic elements as he describes them seem a matter of fact, accessible to anyone sensitive enough to recognize them. His language, like Klee's, resorts to figures of speech (it hardly seems possible to talk about the meaning of abstract forms without them)—sounds, growth, collision, impregnation, heat and cold, spheres of influence, dead points, living forms. But unlike Klee's, this language is the necessarily imperfect means of describing what Kandinsky sees as the innate property of the abstract form itself. His points, lines, and planes reverberate with unspecified energy and tensions, and while these may be a reflection of our own emotions (Kandinsky is never really clear about it), they are nevertheless spoken of as if they inhered in the form itself.[32]

Klee's elements have no such innate life. The most primitive abstract forms are at once made analogies of actions and processes in the larger physical and mental world. Not even his famous image of a line going for a walk involves the kind of intrinsic sentience Kandinsky gives to forms and to the very space itself. Klee's line is figuratively endowed with legs; no line of Kandinsky's needs to walk in order to move. Klee relates things typically by association, each topic suggesting the next by a process of metaphorical extension. Consideration of perspective leads by association with the vertical axis of the observer and the horizon line on either side to a consideration of human balance and then of balance in its broadest sense—static balance on earth, the dynamic balance of cosmic forces, balance of forms in pictures; each of these seen as part of a single, general physical and spiritual phenomenon. Similarly, the threefold nature of pictorial forms—active, medial, or passive—is extended to symbolize the tripartite nature of all events.[33]

Klee's repeated insistence that the ultimate form of a work was not as important as the process leading to it had two related aims educationally. As I have already suggested, it predisposed the student to think in orderly terms of the precise consequences of using a given form; correct procedure based on method guaranteed the product a certain formal and ethical integrity. But the kind of process Klee taught also aimed at inculcating a specific way of perceiving the world. It proposed to the student what Klee himself believed and made the basis of his work: that the wellsprings of human and natural creation are essentially one; that art and science have their roots in the selfsame order of things, an order that can be turned to the use of art by a systematic process. Whether this is true is a question beyond the scope of any art criticism. Whatever the answer, the process Klee taught, while rationalistic, was ultimately nonrational.

It is apparent from Klee's description of the railroad tracks receding toward the horizon that for him perspective drawing has no interest whatever as a means of approximating how we actually see. It may be taken quite literally. It is a purely symbolic device whose function is to evoke, and whose meaning accrues to it only after it has been placed in a formal context on the picture plane. But the same attitude obtains when it is nature and not an artistic device that is being considered. Klee's procedure with respect to nature is, if anything, the reverse of analytical: nature is made a realm for aesthetic contemplation. When Klee describes the shape of leaves as the result of the tearing and deforming action of the veins—conceived as lines of force—as they push into the accompanying plane of tissue, he does not aim to give an account of biological functions but is constructing a poetic image of natural forces of a sort useful in creating works of art (Fig. 9).[34] The same empathic response that animates forms in art is bestowed on natural phenomena; both are subject to the artist's emotional pressures.

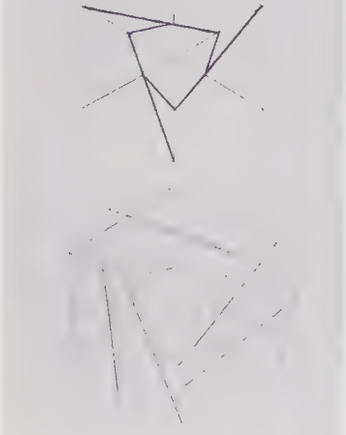


Fig. 8. Paul Klee, Variation on Incarnation as a Cube, reprinted with permission of the publishers from Paul Klee, *Unendliche Naturgeschichte,* Schwabe and Co., Basel, 1970, p. 249.

Fig. 9. Paul Klee, Tearing (of a Leaf) Back to the Center of Radiation, *Unendliche Naturgeschichte,* p. 21.

Fig. 10. Paul Klee, Pop and Lok in Battle, 1930. *Watercolor and pencil on paper, on cardboard, 7½ x 13 ". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne. Copyright SPADEM, 1977.*

What Klee's students were likely to come away with from his courses, in short, was an all-pervading system of comparisons between art and nature and within each realm separately. What is a line, Klee asks his class at one point in 1924. He answers in the role of idealist arguing against a realist for the real existence of line as such: It is "the stream in the distance, thought, path, assault, dagger, thrust, arrow, ray, the sharpness of the knife, scaffold, and that carpenter of all form, the plumbline."[35] It is characteristic of scientific hypotheses that they relate the previously disparate results of observation and analysis while preserving their distinctness at a lower level. Klee's desire was to unite art and nature under the all-encompassing vision of art. Far from preserving distinctions or making them sharper, his minute discriminations only served, as Robert Goldwater observed forty years ago about Klee, to blur the ultimate distinctions among things.[36]

All this no doubt comes down to saying that Klee was after all an artist and not a scientist. But although order in some sense is presumably necessary to anything we acknowledge as art, it is a very different thing to insist upon order; to elaborate a pre- or sub-artistic system as something to be learned; to believe as Klee did that science and art can meet on common ground; that the processes of classifying, ordering, and articulating needed in science are also necessary to art, however different their final purposes. Nor is it merely pedagogy that demands such principles, for even abstraction can be, and in more recent years has been, taught with quite a different emphasis than the appeal to objectivity and science constantly made by Klee in the Bauhaus. That appeal is less indicative of a scientific spirit in Klee (which is not to deny it altogether) than it is of a scientism shared by other modern artists of the time. Indeed, the very notion itself that art is built up out of discrete, arrangeable units—what Klee called dividual forms—is part of that scientism, which arose in the decade and a half after the invention of Cubism and came to have its locus in the Bauhaus where it was promoted in all the theory courses.

The atmosphere of science in the Bauhaus, however, was in striking contrast to the sense of the remote and ineffable that was its frequent accompaniment, and in part its consequence, in the work of the Bauhaus painters. Besides Klee and Kandinsky one thinks of Feininger, Itten, or Schlemmer with his grand but ultimately nonrational conception of man in harmony with space. In this respect the estimation of art in the Bauhaus was more conservative than one tends to suppose. The repeated contention within the school that art cannot be taught was one expression of a belief in the visionary and prophetic powers of art that can be traced without interruption from the Symbolists, but that was held with particular conviction in Germany. The distinction made by Gropius in the first Bauhaus proclamation between the exalted achievements of true art and the humble if honorable service of mere craft or design continued to be voiced by artists in the Bauahus to the very end. In Weimar a persistent if tenuous attempt had been made to bring the two together. In Dessau, especially under Meyer's direction, the attempt was given up as essentially romantic, and the split between the fine and the applied arts became institutional in an actual separation of course work.

Among the Bauhaus painters there was little of the flippancy and cynicism of Dada with respect to the idea of art. The traditional importance and self-sufficiency of the work of art was assumed by all the Bauhaus painters, even by Moholy-Nagy, who in some of his work came closest among the Form Masters to the spirit of Dada. With the possible exception of Moholy, none of the first generation of Bauhaus painters developed a pictorial aesthetic easily capable of being extended to include architecture and applied design as did De Stijl in Holland or Constructivism in Russia. Despite the great influence of those movements in the Bauhaus, the work of the Bauhaus painters remained on the whole precious, intricate, and self-contained to a degree traditional in the fine arts. This is true in part even for Albers who, despite the emphasis in his Bauhaus teaching on hard-headed calculation and building for

society,[37] himself came to paint in a style of pure effusion, in which geometry is little more than a frame for disembodied color effects.

In Klee's case the ineffable did not exclude allusion to the everyday world; but as if to justify the faith of Kandinsky, who in 1924 in a letter to Will Grohmann[38] voiced his confidence that the human spirit was at last beginning to make contact with the universal spirit (*Weltgeist*), Klee after 1923 moved into a more detached, hermetic realm of imagery than before. It happened very largely by way of emphasizing principles of order. His preoccupation with quantification and method was accompanied in his work by an increasingly generalized symbolic content tending to exclude narrative or anecdote. The details of his pictures of the middle Twenties become more stereotyped, more "dividual," serving more exclusively as building blocks for larger configurations. It tends to mean a loss of distinctiveness in figures as well, and with it a lessening of the satire and scurrility that had dominated his work up to that time, and particularly from about 1918 to 1922 when he was strongly under Dada influence.[39]

How seriously Klee was committed to his elaborate Bauhaus theories and what they ultimately meant to him and to his work is still not clear in detail. When he left the Bauhaus in 1931 for the Düsseldorf Academy he did not lose his belief in the need to master certain basic principles of art, but he did not again elaborate them as he had in the Bauhaus. His late letters from Dessau reveal an artist tired of returning again and again to the preparation of lectures and unsure even of the value of teaching.[40]

In Düsseldorf he continued to expound the elements of art, but he did not have to teach theory; they were kept in due proportion, without the detail of the Bauhaus years and taught largely through analyses of his own and his students' works.[41] His paintings, too, tend to become freer in Düsseldorf, though the process of loosening had already begun at the end of his Bauhaus stay. As if in reaction to the cerebral complexity of his theories, his work moved above all toward simplicity and a more direct treatment of form. He experimented in various ways to achieve a greater immediacy of image: loosely drawn stick figures against relatively unstructured grounds, for example. In Düsseldorf he expressed his opposition to introducing sculptural form into painting as Picasso was doing then; it was too primitive a way of creating three-dimensional space, he thought. Yet its very obviousness tempted him as a way to a more direct and vigorous expression. He had already tried it in paintings like *Pop and Lok in Battle* of 1930 (Fig. 10), and he was to try it in a number of similar paintings afterward. The work of the late Twenties and early Thirties seems plainly to indicate that he had come to feel that the balance between order and willfulness had tilted too far in the direction of a rigor he no longer found adequate to the force of his imagination and (it seems impossible to doubt, though it is difficult to prove) the pressures of a life increasingly isolated by political events.

1. Paul Klee, *Form- und Gestaltungslehre,* ed. Jürg Spiller (Basel and Stuttgart), Vol. 1, *Das bildnerische Denken* (1956), vol. 2, *Unendliche Naturgeschichte* (1970). Hereafter as Spiller I and II.
2. This was the complaint of the Stuttgart Academy, which rejected Schlemmer's and other students' request in 1919 to have Klee teach there. See Felix Klee, *Paul Klee: His Life and Work in Documents,* trans. Richard and Clara Winston, New York, 1962, p. 156.
3. "Schöpferische Konfession," in Kasimir Edschmid, ed., *Tribüne der Kunst und Zeit* 13 (Berlin, 1920).
4. Adolf Behne, "Paul Klee," *Die Weissen Blätter* 4, no. 5 (May 1917), pp. 167-69. Itten states that he was responsible for recommending Klee to Gropius, but that credit has also been given to Johannes Molzahn, who was then living in Weimar, and it is possible that both artists were involved. The source for Molzahn's role in Klee's hiring is his then close friend Peter Röhl; but the question must be raised whether Röhl is a reliable witness where Gropius is concerned. In 1923 Röhl, who had been a student in the Bauhaus but was now in the academy reestablished not long before by the Thuringian government to rival the Bauhaus, figured prominently in an attempt to discredit Gropius with the authorities. See Johannes Itten, *Design and Form: The Basic Course at the Bauhaus,* trans. John Maass, New York, 1963, p. 10; Ernst Scheyer, "Molzahn, Muche and the Weimar Bauhaus," *Art Journal* 28, no. 3 (Spring 1969), p. 270, which accepts Röhl's testimony. For a summary of Röhl's actions against Gropius see Karl-Heinz Hüter, *Das Bauhaus in Weimar,* Berlin, 1976, p. 156.
5. Jürgen Glaesemer, *Paul Klee. Die farbigen Werke im Kunstmuseum Bern,* Sammlungskataloge des Berner Kunstmuseums: Paul Klee 2, Bern, 1976, pp. 134-35.
6. *Ibid.,* p. 135. See also Ernst Toller, *I Was a German: The Autobiography of Ernst Toller,* trans. Edward Crankshaw, New York, 1934, pp. 211-15.
7. On the money issue see Hans M. Wingler, *The Bauhaus: Weimar Dessau Berlin Chicago,* trans. Wolfgang Jabs and Basil Gilbert, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1969, p. 120. For Klee's dissatisfaction, Felix Klee, *Paul Klee,* pp. 187-89, and Christian Geelhaar, *Paul Klee and the Bauhaus,* Greenwich, Conn., 1973, p. 20.
8. Wingler, pp. 330-31, 342-43, with ills.
9. For a description of all this material and a critique of Spiller's editing of it see Max Huggler, "Die Kunsttheorie von Paul Klee," in *Festschrift Hans R. Hahnloser zum 60. Geburtstag 1959,* ed. Ellen J. Beer, Paul Hofer, and Luc Mojon, Basel and Stuttgart, 1961, pp. 425-41. According to Huggler, Klee's separate and careful classification of some 3,000 loose sheets of notes and diagrams argues for a planned theoretical work beyond the scope of what could have gone into the Bauhaus book by Klee announced in a prospectus as late as 1927 under the title *Bildnerische Mechanik* but never written (p. 427). The prospectus is in Wingler, pp. 130-31.
10. For Meyer's views see his writings in Claude Schnaidt, *Hannes Meyer. Bauten, Projekte und Schriften,* Teufen AR, Switzerland, 1965, pp. 90-99. See also Oskar Schlemmer's reports in his *Briefe und Tagebücher,* ed. Tut Schlemmer, Munich, 1958, pp. 207-08. Why the theory courses were compulsory under Meyer despite his scorn remains an unanswered question.
11. Wassily Kandinsky, "Der Wert des theoretischen Unterrichts in der Malerei," *Bauhaus. Zeitschrift für Gestaltung* 1, no. 1 (1926); reprinted in Kandinsky, *Essays über Kunst,* ed. Max Bill, 2d enlarged ed., Bern, 1963, p. 89.
12. Spiller II, p. 273, lecture of January 9, 1924.
13. Herbert Read, *A Concise History of Modern Painting,* New York and Washington, 1969, p. 186.
14. Adolf Hölzel, "Über künstlerische Ausdrucksmittel und deren Verhältnis zu Natur und Bild," *Die Kunst für Alle* 20 (1904), p. 132; Gino Severini, *Du cubisme au classicisme,* Paris 1921, p. 23; *Der Blaue Reiter. Herausgegeben von Wassily Kandinsky und Franz Marc,* ed. and documented Klaus Lankheit, Munich, 1965, p. 87; Vilmos Huszar, "Iets over die farbenfibel van W. Ostwald," *De Stijl* 1, no. 10 (August 1918), p. 113.
15. Spiller I, pp. 433-35, 116—all from the lecture of May 15, 1922.
16. Spiller I, p. 89 (from Klee's Jena lecture of 1924, published in English as *On Modern Art*).
17. Spiller I, p. 133. "Stellen wir uns darunter Eisenbahnschienen vor. Das hat nun etwas sehr Irreführendes(?). Denn diese Linien sind doch wahrhaftig divergent genug! Eisenbahnschienen, die sich immer mehr voneinander entfernen, das gibt ja die schönste Entgleisung. Oder wenn man die entgegengesetzte Richtung annimmt. Eisenbahnschienen, die sich jenseits bald einmal kreuzen werden, das ist doch fast noch bedenklicher(?) . . . Nun, wir sind eben aus dem flächigen Begriff unversehens ins räumliche Gebiet gelangt . . . Wir treiben Perspektive."
18. This has already been observed by Giulio Carlo Argan in his preface to the Italian and English editions of Spiller I (*The Thinking Eye,* trans. Ralph Manheim, preface trans. E. Lewis-Isastid, New York and London, 1961, introd. p. 17).
19. Spiller I, p. 113n.
20. On the two paintings and similar layered ones see Geelhaar, *Paul Klee,* pp. 117-20, 126-27, 152.
21. Cf. Wassily Kandinsky, *Point and Line to Plane,* trans. Howard Dearstyne and Hilla Rebay, New York, 1947, esp. pp. 35-37, 66-67, 83, 92. It is worth noting that the influential classicistic theories of Hölzel ("Über Ausdrucksmittel") and Adolf Hildebrand before him (*Das Problem der Form in den bildenden Künsten,* 1893, 3d rev. ed. 1903) are also theories of composition.
22. Spiller I *(Thinking Eye),* introd. p. 13.
23. Hüter, *Bauhaus,* p. 85: ". . . eine Verwissenschaftlichung des schöpferischen Vorgangs soweit dieser einer wissenschaftlich-analytischen Durchdringung zugänglich ist."
24. Ill. Spiller I, introd. p. 12.
25. Marianne L. Teuber, "New Aspects of Paul Klee's Bauhaus Style," introd. to *Paul Klee: Paintings and Watercolors from the Bauhaus Years 1921-1931* (cat.), Des Moines Art Center, 1973; *idem, "Blue Night by Paul Klee,"* in *Vision and Artifact,* ed. Mary Henle, New York, 1976, pp. 131-51. In this case the evidence is more suggestive than conclusive. Granting Klee's acquaintance with psychological studies, three questions need to be answered before it can be decided whether such forms were purposefully taken from pscyhological treatises and were not merely coincidental—e.g., derivations (schematized like much else in Klee) from similar forms in Cubism—or, at most, unconscious borrowings: 1) Why do they appear in Klee's work when they do? 2) How significant are their presumed scientific sources to the meaning or structure of the work; would it matter appreciably to a work, e.g., if its reversible patterns could not be "flipped" optically? 3) Why, the similarity of certain of his forms to optical illusions having already been noticed in his time, did Klee deny ever having used them knowingly? (See Petra Petitpierre, *Aus der Malklasse von Paul Klee,* Bern, 1957, pp. 54, 58-59.)
26. E.g., the 1928 notes of Helene Nonné-Schmidt; ill. Wingler, p. 524.
27. On Gropius see M. Franciscono, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar,* Urbana, 1971, pp. 245-46.
28. "Exakte Versuche im Bereich der Kunst," *Bauhaus. Zeitschrift für Gestaltung* 2, no 2/3, reprinted in Wingler, p. 148.
29. As early as 1902. Cf. *The Diaries of Paul Klee 1898-1918,* ed. Felix Klee, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968, no. 411/412.
30. Geelhaar, *Paul Klee,* p. 19. On the affinities between Klee's and Kandinsky's ideas see also Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Painting,* New York and London, 1938, p. 157.
31. Georges Vantongerloo, "Réflections," *De Stijl* 1, no. 9 (July 1918), p. 98.
32. Already observed by Goldwater, *Primitivism,* p. 158. Neither Klee nor Kandinsky try to validate their theories by appeal to a basis in experimental science. In this respect they do not follow the 19th-century tradition of "scientific" aesthetics; e.g., of the neo-impressionists, whose theories were an influential forerunner of modern theories of abstraction.
33. On Klee's treatment of balance and threefold description of events, Huggler, "Kunsttheorie," p. 434; Werner Haftmann, *The Mind and Work of Paul Klee,* New York and Washington, 1967, pp. 99-103.
34. Spiller II, pp. 13, 17. "Unsere Auffassung der Rippen als konstruktive, gliedernde Energien bringt es mit sich, den Werdegang des Blattes (im bildnerischen Sinn) nun als eine Auseinandersetzung zwischen linearer Energie oder Besonderheit und flächiger Massigkeit oder Vielheit zu denken . . . Je schärfer die Strahlen . . . desto spitziger die Winkel der Grenzlinie *[*des Blattes*)*" (lecture of October 29, 1923).
35. Spiller II, p. 301, lecture of January 9, 1924. See Spiller's introd., p. 62, for the correct sequence of Klee's notes in the book.
36. Goldwater, *Primitivism,* pp. 158-59.
37. E.g., the description of his *Vorkurs* in "Schöpferische Erziehung" (1928). reprinted in Wingler, pp. 142-43.
38. Letter of July 1924, in Karl Gutbrod, ed., *Lieber Freund. Künstler schreiben an Will Grohmann,* Cologne, 1968, p. 66; quoted in Geelhaar, *Paul Klee,* p. 19.
39. This is not quite the same as Grohmann's division of Klee's Bauhaus works into so-called outer, middle, and inner circles of imagery. Grohmann's categories were based somewhat arbitrarily on degrees of abstraction or departure from nature; this tendency is more general, cutting across all subjects (cf. Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee,* New York, 1954, pp. 192ff).
40. See note 7.
41. Our main sources for Klee's ideas in Düsseldorf are the student transcriptions of his comments published in Petitpierre, *Aus der Malklasse von Paul Klee*

PAUL KLEE AND BARON WELZ

JAMES SMITH PIERCE

In seeking "abstract structures which surpass schematic intention and achieve a new naturalness," Klee's ideographic images accord with the drawings of the schizophrenic Baron Heinrich Welz published in 1922.

Fig. 1. Heinrich Welz, Circle of Ideas of a Man, Projected on the Outside World. *Pencil on paper. Prinzhorn Collection, Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic.*

Fig. 2. Paul Klee, An Adventure between Kurl and Kamen, 1925. *Pen and ink on paper.*

In his efforts to free art from traditional optical modes of representation and to find instead the means to render "secret vision visible," Klee found comfort in the "confirmations" of this direction offered by the example of the art of "children, madmen, and savages." Such confirmations were not to be found in the art museums of his day. Reviewing an exhibition of paintings by his friends of the Blaue Reiter in Munich, Klee says that their work should be seen as:

> . . . primitive beginnings in art, such as one finds in ethnographic collections or at home in one's nursery. Do not laugh, reader! Children also have artistic ability, and there is wisdom in their having it! The more helpless they are, the more instructive are the examples they furnish us; and they must be preserved free of corruption from an early age. Parallel phenomena are provided by the works of the mentally diseased; neither childish behavior nor madness are insulting words here, as they commonly are. All this is to be taken very seriously, more seriously than all the public galleries, when it comes to reforming today's art.[1]

These were startling words for 1912, and the idea that the art of the insane should be taken just as seriously as the work of children, Black Africans, and South Sea Islanders is still rather unsettling. In my thesis, *Paul Klee and Primitive Art* (Garland Publishing, New York, 1976), I analyzed Klee's use of principles derived, in part, from his study of children's drawings, European folk art, African, Oceanic, and Pre-Columbian art. Here, I shall draw some surprising parallels between Klee's art and thought and that of the schizophrenic Baron Heinrich Welz (b. 1883).

Klee would have seen six drawings by Welz reproduced in Hans Prinzhorn's *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken*[2] soon after its publication in 1922. Prinzhorn, a psychiatrist at the Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic, had spent three years collecting some 5,000 drawings, paintings, and sculpture by the inmates of several European psychiatric institutions. In this highly original study, he analyzed them not primarily as clues to the identification and treatment of mental illness, but as works of art of value in their own right. His approach is formal rather than symptomatological and he singles out the work of ten gifted

schizophrenics for detailed study, daring to suggest that they are "in contact, in a totally irrational way, with the most profound truths, and have reproduced, unconsciously, pictures of transcendence."[3] The works are very well reproduced in the original edition and several appear in excellent color reproductions. It is no wonder then that this book, as Lothar Schreyer tells us, was "going the rounds in the Bauhaus" in Weimar and that it should be found on a shelf in Paul Klee's studio.

According to Schreyer, who occupied a studio in the same building, Klee took a copy of *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken* from the shelf during one of Schreyer's visits and said:

> You know this excellent piece of work by Prinzhorn, don't you . . . This picture is a fine Klee. So is this, and this one too. Look at these religious paintings. There's a depth and power of expression that I never achieve in religious subjects. Really sublime art. Direct spiritual vision . . . I say it often, but sometimes it isn't taken seriously enough, that in our time worlds have opened up which not everybody can see into, although they too are a part of nature. Perhaps it's really true that only children, madmen and savages see into them. I mean, for example, the realm of the unborn and the dead, the realm of what can be, might be, but need not necessarily be. An in-between world. At least for me it's an in-between world. I call it that because I feel that it exists between the worlds our senses can perceive, and I absorb it inwardly to the extent that I can project it outwardly in symbolic correspondences. Children, madmen and savages can still, or again, look into it. And what they see and picture is for me the most precious kind of confirmation.[4]

Despite common goals of making this unseen "in-between" world visible, Klee always distinguished his work from that of natural and spontaneous artists because of his own "professional" concerns with formal problems. He adapted a wide range of "primitive" modes and methods, but they are always adjusted to a finely tuned and highly self-conscious sense of formal play. Although he accepted chance effects and let his pictures grow like plants, avoiding preconceived notions of the final form, his work can hardly be called spontaneous or compulsive. Each precisely dated and numbered work of this latter-day Leonardo is seen as part of a methodical search for cosmic knowledge. If anything, Klee was the victim of both his wide-ranging intellect and his good bourgeois common sense (always tinged with irony) rather than the "diseased brain" to which the Philistines and Nazis attributed the forms of his pictures. As Prinzhorn points out, "irony is by its very nature excluded [from the art of schizophrenics] because it always refers to commonly accepted conventions, the very thing the schizophrenic has excluded from his thought."[5]

In spite of, or rather *because of,* his truly superior sanity, Klee, who sought ultimate knowledge rather than mere repressive normality, was fascinated with the work of the insane. Sometimes, I believe, he went beyond simply noting "confirmations" to actually borrowing pictorial ideas when it suited his purpose. Among the several devices which Klee borrowed from the illustrations in Prinzhorn's book, those taken from Welz are perhaps most significant in pointing up Klee's primary purpose of "making visible," because they deal with the visualization of thought itself.

Baron Welz, a German lawyer, whom Prinzhorn describes as having been "very sensitive and idealistic" in his youth, wrote many poems, a play, and a sociological study, *Regarding Centralization,* which his brother described as "unclear but nevertheless quite rational and not pathologic."[6] Although Prinzhorn's biographical data are sketchy, Welz appears to have been committed to an asylum in 1912 after a period of several weeks during which he stayed in bed, "hallucinated, talked nonsense, and suffered from hypochondria, a fear of being poisoned, and sudden excitements." Welz had been something of an amateur artist and one of the first attempts to "reproduce his delusions on paper," after being committed, is the drawing labeled by Prinzhorn as *Circle of Ideas of a Man, Projected on the Outside World* (Fig. 1). Prinzhorn describes it as "a mighty head which looks as if made from a slab of stone breaking open at the top and transformed into a bouquet of small tableaus, including a palace, a tournament, a lion, and women." Prinzhorn fails to mention other significant elements in the circle of ideas: a conventional allegorical figure of Justice (Welz was, after all, trained as a lawyer), a family group, and, most important, two antennae beaming radio waves. The latter are particularly significant in light of Welz's theories of "thought transmission." Welz "claimed that he could clearly feel how his inhibited thoughts freed themselves and projected themselves forward from a certain point in his brain." The zig-zag line in the drawing, along the back of the head and directly beneath the large radio tower, suggests active thought projecting upward and possibly outward through the antennae.

In his drawing *Thoughts* (*Die Gedanken,* 1917/122), Klee had surrounded a central frontal face with a variety of linear figures and symbols anticipating the memories of the "journey to the land of better understanding" described in his *Creative Credo* (begun 1918):

> All sorts of lines. Spots. Dots. Smooth surfaces, shaded surfaces. Wavy movement. Constricted, articulated movement. Countermovement. - Network and weaving. Brickwork, fish-scales. Solo. Chorus. A line losing itself, a line growing stronger (dynamics).
>
> The happy equanimity of the first stretch, then the inhibitions, the nervousness! Restrained trembling, the caress of hopeful breezes. Before the storm, the gadflies' attack. The fury, the murder. The good cause a guiding thread, even in the thick of twilight. The lightning shaped like the fever curve. Of a sick child. . .Long ago.[7]

Klee returned to the theme of the little journey in a drawing of 1925, *An Adventure between Kurl and Kamen* (*Abenteuer zwischen Kurl und Kamen;* Fig. 2), only this time the thoughts have taken on a decidedly more material form. They are more substantial than the face beneath them and, à la Welz, they have been piled up on top of the thinker's head. The imagination need not be stretched too far to see here an ironic transformation of Welz's bizarre invention—a "memory image" in the most literal sense. In this drawing Klee maintains his usual lucidity of form, avoiding too close an approximation of the absurdly concrete character of Welz's *Circle of Ideas.* By the addition of discrete linear elements, Klee kept visible the very process by which each image was created.

The drawings of Welz, like those of Klee, also seem to have evolved toward a more abstract, transparent style, combining, as Klee would say, "concrete representation" with "a pure use of the linear element."[8] In another drawing (Fig. 3), reproduced by Prinzhorn as *Geometrical Portrait,* the profile of a man's head appears within a complex network of precisely ruled lines of varying thickness. Transparent planes are formed by parallels. The only deviation from this rigid geometry is the active squiggle at the base of the neck which, as in other drawings by Welz, may represent an energy source. Prinzhorn tells us that Welz "attributed his physical sensations to magnetism, especially the disturbed polarization of his body." Here, as Prinzhorn suggests, Welz is probably giving graphic form to his notions of "the existence of various centers from which lines of force radiate, quite in keeping with his ideas about the projection of thoughts and the polarization of the human body in relation to the earth and other bodies."

Klee drew many similar geometrical heads and figures from 1922, the year *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken* appeared, through 1930. He took up the theme again in the ominously anti-fascist *More Will be Marching Soon* (*Bald marschieren mehr,* 1934/R 13). But the geometrical "portraits" by Klee which most strikingly parallel the work of Welz are those which incorporate the motif of the Circle of Ideas.

Remarkably, the analysis of form and theory presented above in connection with Welz's *Geometrical Portrait* might apply equally well to Klee's *Limits of the Intellect* (*Grenzen des Verstandes,* 1927/Om 8; Fig. 4). Atop a geometrical physiognomy, ladders rise in a Circle of Ideas but do not reach the cosmic sphere above. A single black line, like one of those rising from Welz's *Geometrical Portrait,* tenuously connects a ladder of ideas to the sphere. In this image Klee, as Dürer in his *Melencolia,* metaphorically poses the problems of intuition, imagination, and genius, which, lying beyond the pale of pure reason, elude all conscious efforts to attain them. Klee, just as Welz, was conscious of polar tensions.[9] They abound in his

teaching. But one of the most provocative polarities for Klee was the contradiction between reason and intuition, between the rationalism of the Bauhaus program, including his own methodical pedagogy, and the ultimate goal of artistic expression. Klee defined the problem with words in his essay, *Exact Experiments in the Realm of Art,* published by the Bauhaus in 1928.[10]

An earlier metaphor of balanced rationality, but without so obvious an allusion to the cosmic dimension, is the well known image found in the various versions of the *The Tightrope Walker* (*Der Seiltänzer,* 1923; Fig. 5). These too incorporate forms which may derive from Welz's drawings. Looking at the lower part of the image, a physiognomy subtly emerges from the acrobatic apparatus. The outline of neck, chin, and cheek are formed by a long curving line. The short straight mouth is connected by the straight line of a profile nose which intersects a long line bearing dot-like eyes. As this geometrical head slowly appears, it is seen that the tightrope walker too is part of a Welzian Circle of Ideas.

Before turning to the most striking formal parallels between Klee and Welz, it is worth noting, in passing, another drawing by Welz, identified by Prinzhorn as *Vital Observation of Pastor Obermaier* (Fig. 6). Although it bears no obvious relation to any single work by Klee which I have seen, Klee must certainly have found it a most reassuring "confirmation." This beautifully transparent drawing, in which the formal elements are retained in a state of pristine purity, offers us a rare and moving glimpse into the "in-between" world. Prinzhorn was sensitive to its quality:

> Every suggestion of the physical, almost every realistic detail, is suspended. On first glance we might think of the picture as a a sketch of a landscape. The linear grooves, the furrows of a field, and the rows of trees are included because of Welz's obvious liking for ornamental display. But we are brought up short because despite all of the playful dissolution we seem to see not just any human outline but apparently that of an individual appearing out of the confusion of lines. Did the drawer succeed in his intention to produce an abstract portrait without realistic detail? Undoubtedly, in our opinion. Welz solved his bizarre problem surprisingly well. We may dismiss the problem, but we cannot discredit Welz's achievement.

Klee, of course, did not dismiss the problem. It was central to his art. Welz's *Vital Observation* may bear no superficial formal resemblance to any single image by Klee, but it is very close in feeling and method to his most lucid work, most particularly his pantheistic visions of landscape. In the "Autobiographical Jottings," published by Klee's son, we find, under the heading "Summer, 1902," the laconic note: "Spiritualization of landscape, mingling of its psyche with human sensibility."[11] This was a theme which Klee pursued throughout his life. It appears in its most obvious form in those double images, such as *Landscapely-physiognomic (Landschaftlich-physiognomisch,* l931/w18) or *Play on the Water* (*Spiel auf dem Wasser,* 1935/3) in which discrete landscape elements form a human body or face. Whether or not we agree with Prinzhorn that the abstract improvisation of *Vital Observation* does indeed include elements of landscape, the transparency of the technique reveals a close kinship to those drawings and paintings by Klee which do.

Welz, the madman, and Klee, one of the sanest of men, both had their extremes of rationalism and both had cosmic longings. Klee was able to function effectively, if passively, in the everyday world and, unlike Welz and other schizophrenics, could view his own absolute positions with ironical detachment and "impish laughter"[12]; but Welz and Klee both worked away at the definition and analysis of highly abstract systems and both delighted in presenting their ideas diagrammatically. Prinzhorn tells us that Welz "constructed a most peculiar, tidy and apparently strictly systematic framework which includes the following categories: willology, ideology, justiceology, beautiology, artology, zoology, sexology, jokeology, naturology, timeology, and formology." Surely Klee, a master of "jokeology," would have noted parallels between the ideas of this madman in an asylum, his own abstruse concepts, and those of his peers in the idealistic Bauhaus.

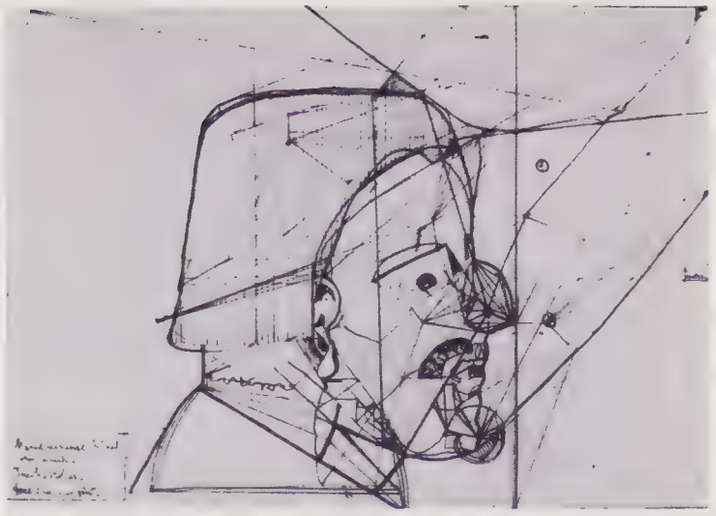


Fig. 3. Heinrich Welz, Geometrical Portrait. *Pencil on paper. Prinzhorn Collection, Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic.*

Fig. 4. Paul Klee, Limits of the Intellect, 1927. *Tempera. Courtesy Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Munich.*

Fig. 5. Paul Klee, The Tightrope Walker, 1923. *Lithograph.*

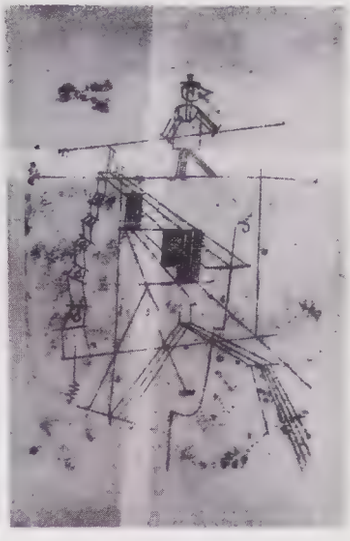
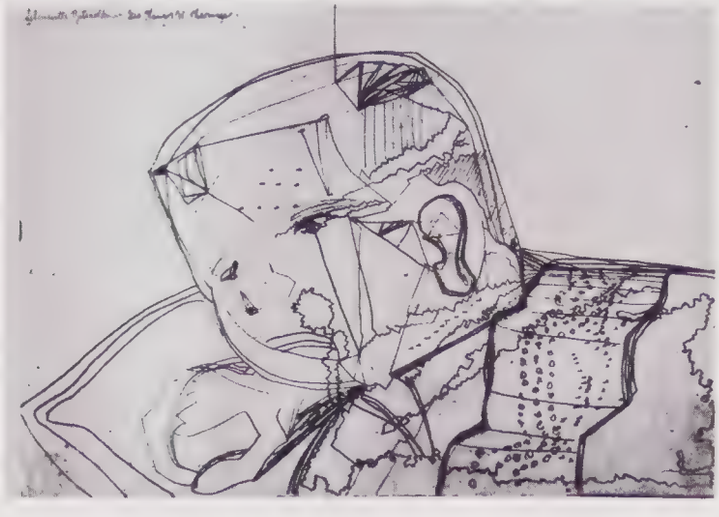


Fig. 6. Heinrich Welz, Vital Observation of Pastor Obermaier. *Pencil on paper. Prinzhorn Collection, Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic.*



Welz and Klee shared a far-ranging cosmic view of life. Prinzhorn notes that Welz would stand for hours at an open window staring into the sky, saying, "I shall change the position of the stars by an act of will." He thought that he maintained telepathic communication with the entire world and "elaborated on his earlier polarization ideas by calculating how one can best overcome the attraction of the earth by spinning around rapidly and then ascending vertically." Welz's medical history notes his urge to turn somersaults repeatedly. At times, he said he did this to correct what he saw as a disturbance in the magnetic polarization of his body.

Klee, in a less physical sense, also aspired to liberate himself from the terrestrial through motion. In *Ways of Nature Study* (1923), he writes of the "yearning to free ourselves from earthly bonds . . . in pure mobility"[13] and, in the Jena lecture of the following year, he speaks of a romantic "desire to hop away from the earth; the next step is to actually take flight. And the liberation is achieved; dynamic forces triumph over the law of gravitation. If the artist knows how to let go, then these forces that defy terrestrial bonds will carry him onward and upward, up to the celestial orbits. He will soar beyond the tempestuous, sentimental style to the kind of romanticism that merges with the universe."[14] Klee, of course, is speaking metaphorically and Welz felt he could literally "lift-off," but the underlying impulse is the same.

The cosmic view of life and art, which Klee presents in *Ways of Nature Study,* dismisses mundane materialism and a camera-view of the world: "The artist of today is more than an improved camera; he is more complex, richer and wider. He is a creature within the whole, that is to say, a creature on a star among stars." He concludes by saying that new non-optical ways of studying nature enable the student "to rise towards a metaphysical view of the world and to form free abstract structures which surpass schematic intention and achieve a new naturalness, the naturalness of the work. Then he creates a work, or participates in the creation of works, that are the image of God's work."

A beautiful diagram, which in itself quite surpasses "schematic intention," accompanies the *Ways of Nature Study,* exquisitely clarifying the poetry of Klee's propositions.[15] Welz too was given to diagrammatic expression and Prinzhorn reproduces a *Napoleon Curve* which is so elegant that it might have come from Klee's lecture notes were it not for the absurdity of its purpose. Welz "connects, with a curve reminiscent of a propeller, all the places in central Europe which were important in Napoleon's campaigns. When connected, the most important of the lines produce a curve resembling the capital letter 'N.' According to Welz, if we trace it several times daily by moving our heads along a similar imaginary curve, we begin to understand Napoleon's behavior and attitudes."

Welz's active mind was constantly seeking to unite apparently unconnected concepts, objects, persons, and events. In the asylum garden he applies "the names of his relatives or sociological terms" to trees and, "in lining up these trees, each of which bears several names, from various directions, discovers surprising relationships which he considers new and real knowledge." Another time, he picked up a green leaf and expounded on the mystical relationship which it bore to a patient named Greenleaf.

Klee too had a romantic longing to unite all things, to find the one in the many. In the teeming harbor of Naples in 1902 he feels a "neutral" detachment and records in his diary his desire "to be able to reconcile the opposites! To express the great manifold in a single word!"[16] In the "Autobiographical Jottings" for 1918 Klee again expresses his detachment, the "cool romanticism" which leads him to seek the fundamental laws of creation: "The idea of the cosmos displaces that of earthliness . . . I take for my start a distant, original point of creation where I assume formulas for man, animal, plant, rock and the elements, for all moving forces simultaneously."[17] Examples of this kind of universal abstraction are given in the *Creative Credo* which was begun the same year. Here Klee envisions an art that "arises out of the play of forces, a state in which abstract forms can become meaningful objects, or else pure symbols as constant as numbers and letters of the alphabet. Taken all together, these may become symbols of the cosmos."[18]

Welz, unknown to Klee, had apparently already arrived at just such a point of symbolic abstraction. In attempts to present the concepts of his various "ologies," he had covered sheets of paper with pencil drawings of abstract linear configurations which he believed corresponded to general ideas and universal forces. They were, in effect, ideograms, although Prinzhorn does not identify them as such. He says that Welz believed that he was "able to immerse himself so deeply in an idea that a curve resulting from his concentration will magically incorporate some of the extract of the idea." He had done this in the *Napoleon Curve,* but Prinzhorn also reproduces more spontaneous examples. These are found in Welz's *Willology of the Sun,* a page of twenty freely drawn abstractions which look like nothing so much as Klee's scribble drawings of the Thirties. A "confirmation" before the fact!

Klee's late ideograms and "psychograms" are a natural outgrowth of his art, stemming from his interest in the close relationship between drawing and writing. The pictograph and ideogram are common ground for word and picture, for both verbalizing and visualizing.[19] No direct "influence" from Welz is indicated despite Klee's patent knowledge of his work, but the parallel is fascinating nonetheless. Although somewhat arbitrary compared to Klee's closely integrated forms, the linear abstractions of Welz's *Willology* are theoretically perfect realizations of the "abstract structures which surpass schematic intention and achieve a new naturalness," envisioned by Klee in *Ways of Nature Study,* but only fully realized in the bold, spare "psychic improvisations" of his final decade.

As congenial as the idea of Welz's cosmic symbolism might be to Klee, it was too much for Prinzhorn. Prinzhorn's unusual respect for the spontaneous art of the insane led him to preserve and publish Welz's abstractions, but he notes, nonetheless, that "when we look at one of his catalogs of expressive curves even the most broad-minded among us will not doubt the sad fiasco produced here by a basically correct idea which is literally reduced *ad absurdum* by Weiz's completely uncritical attitude. He is correct in his belief that whatever fills a mind completely finds expression in graphic representations, but he is wrong in thinking that actual ideas can be represented."

Apparently this form of expression was too much for Welz himself, because, withdrawing further into himself, he eventually stopped drawing with the pencil altogether. Inspired by a visit from Prinzhorn, he broke his customary silence to tell him that, in future, "he would simply strew graphite over his drawing paper and would force the particles into lines and forms by staring at them."

1. *The Diaries of Paul Klee,* ed. Felix Klee (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1964), 266, no. 905.
2. Hans Prinzhorn, *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken* (Verlag Julius Springer, Berlin, 1922), reprinted 1923, 1968. Translated into English as *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* (Springer-Verlag, New York, 1972).
3. Prinzhorn (1972), 242.
4. Lothar Schreyer, *Erinnerungen an Sturm und Bauhaus* (Albert Langen and Georg Müller, Munich, 1956). The section on Klee, "The Wizard's Kitchen," is translated in Felix Klee, *Paul Klee: His Life and Work in Documents* (George Braziller, New York, 1962), 180-85.
5. Prinzhorn (1972), 245.
6. This and following quotes concerning Welz are taken from Prinzhorn's chapter on the artist (1972), 196-200.
7. *Paul Klee: The Thinking Eye,* ed. Jürg Spiller (George Wittenborn, New York, 1964), 95.
8. Jena lecture, 1924, Spiller, 95.
9. Klee too expounds a theory of "the polarization of the human body in relation to the earth and other bodies." He speaks of two opposite sources influencing the artist: "There is the non-optical way of intimate physical contact, earthbound, that reaches the eye of the artist from below, and there is the non-optical contact through the cosmic bond that descends from above." Spiller, 66.
10. Spiller, 69.
11. Felix Klee, *Documents,* 8.
12. *Creative Credo,* Felix Klee, *Documents,* 155.
13. Spiller, 67.
14. Felix Klee, *Documents,* 175.
15. Spiller, 67.
16. *Diaries,* 98, no. 389.
17. Felix Klee, *Documents,* 16.
18. *Ibid.,* 154.
19. For a discussion of Klee's involvement with these concepts, see James Smith Pierce, "Pictographs, Ideograms, and Alphabets in the Work of Paul Klee," *The Journal of Typographic Research,* I, 3 (July 1967), 219-43.

THREE CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE ART OF PAUL KLEE

MARK ROSKILL

The question of scale in Paul Klee's work and his preference for the more intimate media no longer appears as an issue in the assessment of his art, except perhaps at an introductory level of appreciation. It was one only so long as a notion of monumentality and corresponding artistic ambition, or a canonical concept of design, was used to discriminate between twentieth-century achievements. Nor, when tested in the light of both discipline of realization and range, do Klee's spontaneity and lyricism have the kind of negative connotations that they take on in the later work of Chagall. But the placing of Klee centrally on the map of modern art does require that three issues in his development be put into a sharper critical perspective than is normally brought to bear on them. These issues are the fashion in which he emerged from his early provincialism; the theorizing that he did at the Bauhaus as it becomes reflected in his work of 1926-32; and lastly, whether the late bar-and-sign paintings have a larger metaphysical implication, to set alongside their undoubted structural inventiveness.

Klee's sense of his need to escape from the provincialism imposed upon him by his birth and upbringing in Switzerland, and the situation of art there, is to be pushed much further back than his establishment of contact with the Blaue Reiter group in Munich in 1911 and with the Parisian avant-garde a year later. He had, after all, spent time looking at art in both of those cities in 1904-05; but it had been the art of the museums and the print room that he had looked at then. The spirit in which he did this was one reflecting both his early academic training, with its special emphases on the study of anatomy and etching, and the late-starting, slow-moving tempo of development which still formed part of the natural order and tenor of provincialism at this date. But Klee came quickly to see this pattern as a positive advantage to him, allowing him to develop at his own pace with a keener force of insight into himself. Before 1900 he had felt fully at home with Böcklin who, in his own retrospective comment, was at that time regarded as enormously important in Switzerland," and on his trip to Italy in 1901-02 he developed what he called a "classical-Gothic infatuation" lasting for the next few years. But by 1904 he was already commenting adversely on the evident mannerisms of a "relatively outstanding picture" by Cuno Amiet, shown in the Swiss Salon, and their adverse effect. By 1908, while seeing the strength of Felix Vallotton as compared to the French Nabis and finding him "quite a man," he was calling his way of painting "very unpleasant." And in 1911 even the great Hodler—great especially for the Swiss in his Germanic themes of tormented spirituality and primal yearning, as Klee well knew—was one who "became wearisome" and "got on one's nerves" when his work was seen in quantity.

The most important evidence bearing on Klee's shift of attitude here, and the consciousness underlying it, is provided by the satirical etchings of 1903-05. Because they are the only works of Klee's described in series in his Diary more or less as they were done, the remarks he made bringing up readings in classical literature associated with their themes and his final comment affirming that the series now lay behind him "as a completed Opus One" make it plain that the creation of these prints had a cathartic role for him, both psychologically and imaginatively. To be gotten out of his system was a somewhat morbid and dryly laconic vein of humor which had become linked, in its spell over him, with intense feelings of self-disgust; to be put behind him and built upon was the recognition that, for its effect, the visual rendition of such humor was overly dependent on literary associations and overtones. But what has been less generally recognized is that a charting is also offered here of the emergence from provincialism.

Specifically, it is an emergence from the dangers and excesses that a provincial version of Symbolism held in store at this time—those of overliterariness coupled with, or reinforced by, an excessive concentration on descriptive detail. At the beginning of the series Klee referred back critically to projected pictures of 1901, on the themes of Shame and Disgust: lovers in the dawn light, one gesturing apprehensively toward the day, and a woman lying on a table spilling a vessel "filled with disgusting things"—both directly reminiscent of Symbolism (Hodler perhaps in the first case, Ensor and Rops in the second), but with a labored, distinctly unpoetic specificity to them. For Klee these subjects were "banalities," in tune with his self-recrimination, but still representable if a "unique form" could be found for them. In the earliest of the satirical etchings, he drew, for the mordantly anatomical rendering of the limbs and muscles, on the studies that he had done at Knirr's School in Munich in 1899—again something to be exorcised; and in the etching technique itself he paid obvious tribute to the Northern Renaissance masters of the print, Schongauer and Dürer. Since these same features of mannered anatomical distortion and meticulousness persist to the end of the series, Klee's admiring references to the study of Goya and Beardsley before the series was over are relevant not so much to what actually happens in the later prints as to the kind of visual fantasy that he wanted released, from within himself, by completion of the series. Klee had recognized in his Diary, as early as June 1902, that he could imaginatively project a path of development for himself and dream linked dreams about a momentous breakthrough, but this was only dreaming; whereas by "repeated small acts," by making "small and tight work" into a "real activity," he could pave the way gradually for realization of the gifts unique to him. Correspondingly, it is at the end of the emergence from provincialism, in the *Candide* illustrations of 1911 and the heads of 1912-13, that he has at his disposal a rapid, changeable kind of graphic notation which is at this point

freely adaptable to recording his personal vein of visual fantasy, without recourse to description of any sort at all; and he thereby fulfills what he had looked forward to back in 1905.

It seems clear that Klee's first high period of sustained achievement comes in the early 1920s. The combination then of a free and flexible linear calligraphy and a use of color to create both background and surrounding atmosphere works so that the constructive segmentation of the surface and the fluidity of an imaginary but spatially limited ambience are completely integrated, in terms of both imagery and mood. But if one speaks of that integration as fully successful in two-dimensional terms—respecting the dictates of an extended surface and at the same time subdividing it; giving each image a context to hang on or float against, which is appropriately more suggestive than concretely physical and does not violate the continuities of contour—then the question arises of what Klee attempted in the later 1920s and early 1930s that went beyond this, and with what particular objectives that were or were not open to realization in his terms.

That Klee continued to search and to experiment in those years is unquestionable. It was both in his nature and in the spirit of the Bauhaus, as he had helped to develop it, to do so, even when he was working privately on his own. What opens the directions of his search to critical consideration is, most crucially, the relation between his advanced theorizing of the 1920s and the more generally "constructive" flavor of his painting of 1926-32. That the Germanic nature mysticism which he shared with the Blaue Reiter artists and a personal and evocative kind of titling should give place to a greater primacy of concern with organization and process—reflected now in the titles themselves—is in line with the general movement of art away from privacy and indirectness and toward a more open or universal type of language in the interwar period; and for Klee the poetic and the constructive sides to what he did were always, as in his theory, interrelated. These aspects he could consolidate, but the level of metaphysical integration seems at the same time less deep and complete.

The point may be put another way. The recent publication in two volumes of Klee's notebook and classroom writings, under the titles *The Thinking Eye* and *The Nature of Nature,* shows the major concentration of his theorizing to have come in the early 1920s. The sense of alliance in that period with both Kandinsky and Moholy-Nagy, who were probably his closest institutional colleagues after the departure of Johannes Itten, must have been strongly affected by the changes of atmosphere at the Bauhaus as the regime of Gropius gave place to that of Hannes Meyer and then, from 1930, the directorship of Mies van der Rohe. After 1925 Klee systematized for instructional purposes the methods and forms of inquiry that he had developed in his first five years at the Bauhaus, but the notion of a research of his own, that would test empirically what fuller potentials for expansion and extension in creative procedure there might be, was thereby pushed further into the private realm. The shape envisaged for that extension has for this reason to be reconstructed from an indeterminate existence in between the theory and the different directions of experiment. But the idea would seem to have been, very generally, one of turning, or rotating, into three dimensions the two-dimensional achievement of the early '20s. One may think, for an analogy, of Uccello at the end of his career, in the painting of the *Hunt* (if it is a late work), or of Titian opening up diagonals and a freely circulating kind of space in the 1520s and 1530s, as compared to the dominant frontality and backdrop settings in earlier treatments of the same kind of subject. It fits with this that Klee should have concentrated particularly in the late '20s on the perspectival grouping and recession of architectural or geometric shapes, arranging them either in a room setting or to form the accoutrements of an urban space; and in 1931-32 on irregular pointillistic patterns, which are used to puncture the atmospheric and tonal unity of a color surface, as if to let through space, light, and air and put the dots themselves into coruscating motion, rather than simply having them form drifts across that surface.

But if so, Klee was let down by the limitations in his basic concept of color. This is implicit in the *Pedagogical Sketchbook* where, after all the brilliant originality in the discussion of active line and the diagraming of motion, Klee comes to the element of color only at the end. But the "spectral color circle" at which "we have arrived" is in fact the traditional color-wheel, conventionalized already in nineteenth-century art theory as a hoped for way of combining the scientific and the cosmic, and without any of the potential for kinetic development that Klee seems to attribute to it by the placing of it here in his scheme. Correspondingly, Klee's color in the work of 1926-32 remains basically tonal-atmospheric in cast, as it was in the early 1920s. It is either purely two-dimensional in its expansiveness, or it is played against other colors on a strictly local basis; and it was perhaps in realization of this that Klee shifted in his late period to the use of larger areas of a single, basic color, more roughly or more texturally applied. The judgment on Klee in these remarks is of course a relative one, but the interests that served him best are respected and clarified by it.

When it comes to the late bar-and-sign paintings, the issue is again different. Klee was at this time also producing his late figure paintings, mostly single images, in which spectral presences, human or half-human and close up to the picture plane, increasingly take on the character of visitations from the unconscious. In contrast to the solemn and sometimes mystical character of these images, the bar-and-sign paintings are likely to appear as playful and humorous. The emphasis thereby falls on their structural organization in which the visual wit inheres, more distilled now than it was in the 1920s. But the contributions of Klee's inventiveness to both post-war Europeans (such as Manessier) and to American art of the '40s and '50s (such as Gottlieb's) may obscure the existence in these paintings also of a world-consciousness on Klee's part, which is both deliberated and timely in its implications.

How is a view of the world and its order to be abstracted or divined in these pictures? The absence of central focus and the varying paths of search over the surface which their organization provides, in an unending and ever fresh series of possibilities, may be taken to imply metaphorically that man is no longer the kind of ultimate center, of focus and energy, that he had declared himself to be through his possession and population of the picture space, from the Renaissance on. Faces, eyes, limbs, or parts of bodies peek out of the spatial and coloristic continuity of the environment and are lost in it again; but they take their place, in the progression of one's reading, alongside natural and man-made shapes, and in balance with them, as if to imply that all life-forms are interconnected and equal in importance, and that truth depends correspondingly on one's position in the world, or on the changing points of focus assumed in one's experience of it.

If, then, the large-figure paintings have a kind of edgy hauntedness—evoking the sad overtones, both spiritual and personal, of a world in which the conflicting issues that surround existence can no longer be resolved into a traditional humanistic polarity of good and evil—the bar-and-sign paintings can be taken as substituting for the metaphysical principles of that same tradition the post-Einsteinian concept of the world as forces of energy interacting.

Given a strong sensitivity of insight on Klee's part into the times in which he lived, it is on such general lines that the scope and the seriousness of his late achievement are to be tested.

The fundamental critical contributions from which this essay takes off are those of Clement Greenberg, "On Paul Klee (1879-1940)," *Partisian Review,* 8, 3, May-June 1941, 224-29, repr. in *Five Essays on Klee,* ed. M. Armitage, New York, 1950; Reyner Banham, "Klee's Pedagogical Sketchbook," *Encounter,* 2, 4, April 1954, 53-58 (report of a symposium of November 1953 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, with quotations from a paper by Lawrence Alloway); and David Sylvester, "Paul Klee: La Période de Berne," *Les Temps Modernes,* 6, no. 63, Jan. 1951, 1297-1307 (expanded from a version in English pub. as "Auguries of Experience" in *Tiger's Eye,* no. 6, Dec. 15, 1948, 48-51).

The statements of Klee's cited are from "Notes on my First Forty Years" (trans. from Felix Klee, *Paul Klee, Leben und Werkin Dokumente,* 1960) and from *The Diaries of Paul Klee, 1898-1918,* ed. F. Klee, 1964: in order of citation or reference, sections 576, 816, 904; 517, 602, 693; 480, 578. See also M. Franciscono, "Paul Klee's Italian Journey and the 'Classical Tradition'," *Pantheon,* 32, 1; Jan.-March 1974, 54-64. The Notebook volumes edited (most unhelpfully) by Jürg Spiller were published in English translation in 1961 and 1970. In the third section I have drawn on ideas about the late paintings put forward by a student, Krys Hendren.

RENE CREVEL AS A CRITIC OF PAUL KLEE

GERT SCHIFF

René Crevel's 1930 essay on Klee anticipates many insights into the nature of Klee's art which only now are gradually gaining ground.

After his tragic death in 1935, the works of the French poet René Crevel (Fig. 1) were soon forgotten. When they were republished around 1970, they were read so avidly by a predominantly young audience that most of the new editions were soon out of print again. The reason for this sudden posthumous popularity was this: critics and readers alike recognized in Crevel's work the prefiguration of that spirit of revolt which had inspired the student rebellion of May 1968; the gloom of his last days anticipated the disenchantment that spread when the rebellion proved abortive.

Seen at the distance of almost half a century, Crevel (born 1900 in Paris) appears as the quintessential representative of his generation, the generation after 1918. He has also been described as the *conscience* of his generation; for there was no other young European who embodied with such fervor the innermost feelings of his coevals: their rejection of the old order that had led into war and catastrophe; their longing for universal justice, for a society of free men and women, without classes, without races, without frontiers; yet, at the same time, their disgust of the harsh realities of politics, their clandestine awareness that their idealistic dream could never become reality. It was this awareness that drove so many of them, Crevel first and foremost, into a frenzy of living, into an obsession with beauty, glamour, speed, sex, drugs—an obsession that was only the outward manifestation of their *élan mortel,* their suicidal tendency. Revolutionaries they were; but labile, sentimental revolutionaries. Crevel's hatred of all bourgeois values in state, church, and morality was reinforced by an insufferable family situation. His father, a syphilitic, suffered mental disorder and committed suicide when René was fourteen. His grim, bigot mother transferred her hatred for the "ignominious" father upon the son, his "image" who had inherited the fatal condition. She thus forced the hypersensitive youth into dissipations that could never quite stun his fear of madness and his growing concern with suicide as the "most likely, just and definitive solution" of his problems. At age twenty-five, Crevel was afflicted by tuberculosis, in part, no doubt, as a consequence of his sexual abuses and, as he put it, of his "intermittent usage of diverse alcaloids." From then on, he had to spend yearly a couple of months in sanitariums; when his inherited disease was under control, the acquired one became more virulent. This was the inner state of the young poet who compelled everyone by his charm and beauty; who transformed everything he touched into poesy; who was hailed by the literary establishment—Gide, Cocteau, Léon-Paul Fargue, Ezra Pound, André Breton were among his admirers—and was pampered by society; who was deeply serious in all his intellectual pursuits and had unswerving loyalty to friends and principles. During the twelve years of his literary career, he created an oeuvre that has still much to say even to the non-French reader of the Seventies. Crevel's rage, the impassioned voice of his revolt, his lust for life, his tenderness and his ribaldry have lost none of their vigor.

Although he was in contact with Breton and the nascent movement of Surrealism as early as 1922, Crevel's first three novels are not Surrealist in style or spirit. They deal with puberty, with the awakening of the senses, with the poet's discovery of his existential loneliness, and with the problems of a homosexual who desires, but is unable to accept, the solace offered by women. The masterpiece of this early period, *La Mort difficile* (1926), derives its plot from Crevel's fateful passion for the American painter Eugene MacCown and from the sordid predicament of his family conflict. The following year, when he published *Babylone,* Crevel had fully embraced the Surrealist doctrine. This story about a young girl who wants to "resuscitate the wind" projects upon the stifling world of convention the poet's dream of a higher, sur-reality which would allow Man to act out his desires and to free his imagination. But the following novels, *Êtes-vous fous?* (1929) and *Les Pieds dans le plat* (1933), social satires on a grand scale, are permeated by the gloomy awareness of the impending holocaust. The former is a ghostly caricature of pre-Nazi Berlin, the latter, a vast panorama of European fascism and imperialism; it ends with the words "to be continued at the next war."

Meanwhile, as an essayist Crevel had taken a prominent part in all the changing literary and political feuds of the Surrealists. When the conflict between Surrealism and Communism broke out, with Eluard and Aragon becoming Stalinists while Breton upheld the independence of poetry, Crevel found himself torn between too many irreconcilable allegiancies. He was shocked by the Moscow trials and yet he continued to work for Communist-inspired periodicals and organizations as he saw in fascism the foremost enemy. He confessed his absolute loyalty to Breton although he no longer believed that man and society could be changed through a doctrine as hermetic as Surrealism. Furthermore, he found himself constantly harassed on personal grounds by Breton who, in spite of his Freudianism, was obsessed by a very un-Freudian hostility against homosexuals. In 1935 Crevel, along with Gide, Malraux and others, took an active part in the preparation of the International Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture. When he failed to obtain from the Stalinist organizers their consent to admit Breton and his Surrealist friends, he definitely lost hope in a unified front of all people of good will against fascism. Broken down by his illness and by his political and personal distress, he committed suicide.

René Crevel was a passionate friend of art and artists. His art criticism comprises two essays on Max Ernst, two major ones on Dali, one on the sculptor Renée Sintenis, and the penetrating poetical evocation of *Paul Klee,* reprinted, in an English translation by Alan Brown, on the following pages.[1] The nucleus of this essay was a one-page article, *Merci, Paul Klee,* which Crevel published in December 1928 in the Belgian art journal *Le Centaure.* He wrote the present, enlarged version during a stay in a sanitarium in Leysin, Switzerland, October 1929. Published by Gallimard in a series, *Les Peintres nouveaux* in 1930, it was the first significant tribute of a French writer to the genius of Klee. Quite recently Renée Riese Hubert analyzed Crevel's essay, together with two other Surrealist interpretations of Klee's art by Roger Vitrac and Henri Michaux.[2] She stresses rightly the polemical, anti-bourgeois tendency of Crevel's text, his insistence upon the roots of Klee's art in dreams and the unconscious, and his ensuing neglect of Klee's formal preoc-

Fig. 1. Rene Crevel. Photograph from the Legacy of Thea Sternheim, reproduced by permission of Deutsches Literatur-Archiv, Schiller-Nationalmuseum, Marbach a.N.

Fig. 2. Paul Klee, Company at Table, 1907. *Oil on glass. Collection Bernard Poissonnier, Paris.*

cupations. She realizes that Crevel rather too unhesitatingly claims Klee as a Surrealist and warns the reader not to succumb to his "poetic strategy" as he has but too marvelously "recaptured in words Klee's playfulness." It is this latter aspect that has induced us to reprint the essay in its entirety. Mostly without referring to specific pictures, Crevel recreates in dazzling conglomerations of words Klee's pictorial universe. Without a knowledge of Klee's self-interpretation and of the literature available at the time of his writing, Crevel anticipates many insights into the nature of Klee's art which only now are gradually gaining ground. On the other hand, the essay is also an interesting document of Surrealist aesthetics around 1930. The notes are intended to bring into evidence its merits and to elucidate some of the oblique references.

Paul Klee

Would the bravest of men dare to look straight in the eye of a hippocampus, that question-mark with a horse's head fresh-risen from dream-depths to dream-surface?

What could be a better symbol of Klee's work than this lovely creature of the sea, more vertical in its ascent than the latest in lifts, this centaur whose mere presence is so disturbing that everything accepted must be reassessed?

And how much less formidable do the mastodons with their ponderous affirmations appear in comparison with this deadly, solitary little Pegasus!

The fact is that there has always been and will always be some kind of Reality to act as shepherdess to the herd of giants.

Quietly let the whales graze among the iciest of the liquid steppes.

If I can trust my recollections of natural history from former days, these good, fat mothers (as inexpert at diving as the plump ladies seen on petit bourgeois beaches, because they, like the said plump ladies, have not, come winter, access to shops where they can fuss with ribbons, silks and braid galoon) spout great fountains which metamorphose the water into plumes that ape the feathers on highly regional headpieces in the outermost recesses of the remotest provincial backwater, for, thank God, the wives of sub-prefects and notaries and colonels have not all, despite the century, lost their sense of majesty.

Whale, empress of the polar seas, as the rose is the queen of flowers and the leek is the poor man's asparagus, likeable cetacean, sovereign without a prince consort, too wise a giant to make a mountain of a molehill, you move with pomp among your ice-floes, your conscience clean as a whistle, and you grow fatter than a Dutch queen, and better, for the icebergs deliver you from every temptation, even tulips.

Because your destiny is set, you, convinced that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds, conclude: let the shoemaker stick to his last. For you have more than one trick up your sleeve, and you are fond of saws. Well, wordly and frivolous with your proverbs as M. de La Rochefoucauld with his maxims, you forget that the one and the other can be turned inside-out like a glove. Talk of shoemakers and lasts. Town children are thin enough to have the right to tell you that all professions are idiotic. And, in fact, since modern science has been so good as to teach us that even cows are subject to tuberculosis, it hardly matters to us whether they are a little more or a little less ill-kept.

We like neither the poor man's asparagus nor the rich man's leek.

The mask of easy metaphor torn off, we shall invent fine insults with which to toss vitriol in the face of the nations' wisdom.

And above all there must be no more of this super-sensibility with which pseudo-intellectuals and pseudo-artists deck themselves out.

We are already well-revenged, we have the sweet, positive joy of knowing that the depths which you, whale, in your fear, pretend to disdain are full of the most subtle mysteries.[3]

It is true that the divers of Europe are heavy-fingered and those in Polynesia, who escape the torture of leaden soles, prefer in their watery wanderings to pluck only pearls, soft and round in the likeness of the eyelids of their artless sleep.

So that we can only term miraculous, Paul Klee, this excursion to the most secret depths of the seas from which you have come back, the hollows of your palms filled with a treasure of micas, of comets, of crystals, a harvest of hallucinatory seawrack and intimations of submerged cities.[4]

All that you have brought back from the abyss proves in its transparence to be worthy of the sharp-toothed fish. The crabs, yes, even the crabs have wings.

A painter opened his fists and, from between the slits of his fingers, incredible winged forms escaped to people canvases docile, happily for them, to this magic.

And this is why not one line, however tenuous, is without its quality of vibrancy.

The tearing nails that flayed rocks and shingle at the pleasure of a cyclopean whimsy, all the graffiti of the beyond, the creations of hypnosis and the flowers of ectoplasm are drawn, photographed, without tricks of lighting, without fraudulent romanticism or grandiloquent lies in the expression.[5]

And this is indeed the most intimate and most exact surreality.

A brush becomes magnet, and the labyrinth of the dream, suddenly magnetized, unravels in long spirals.

How timid is the legend that made savage beasts obey the voice of Orpheus, for now plants and stones are moved and can no longer remain immobile.

A world in movement, a universe of pulsing twigs, anthills freed of all police, of all constraint, because sharks' eyes watched their birth, an infallible rhythm that passes all limits, that escapes time and space, precipitates the three kingdoms of this creation.[6]

Then listen to me, you whales, and you too, you other megalomaniacs, listen to me and remember, those fabulous animals that would willingly have fed on coil springs to be able today to grow lengthwise and sideways, these prehistoric monsters, so simple they didn't know what to do with their

Fig. 3. Paul Klee, Fish Magic, 1925. *Oil and watercolor on panel, 30-3/8 x 38½". Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art. Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection*

skins, have (and it serves them right) left nothing on our globe but the memory of their skeletons.

And yet at the dawn of the ages the Diplodocus family must have thought itself destined to reign on this globe *usque ad vitam eternam.*

I am no prophet and no preacher, but I can tell you that there will be fleas until judgement day, whereas if I take a notion to tickle the bones of the ultimate scion of the Diplodocus family, the last and most colossal of the fabulous quadrupeds, who probably despised his cousins, the mammoths, and even more those poor relatives, the elephants, I have only to betake myself to the Museum.

Paul Klee, because you have set free the infinitesimal things this winter, the harvest ticks will sing with siren voices and Europe and the two Americas will finally blush at having succumbed to the metric system.[7] There is also no question of giving in to the temptation of the mysterious Orient which the interest of the larger newspapers and the scholarly reviews, the paradoxes of salon philosophy have made fashionable.

A stock quotation that smells of printer's ink or Nirvana perfumed with Armenian paper, all this is, if not too beautiful, at least too facile to be honest.

We all know the image so dear to M. Maeterlinck, of the two lobes of the brain, the oriental and the occidental, the one quite rightly impervious to the other.[8]

This metaphor, which one would have thought harmless in its amiable simplicity, is really an exhortation to the West to dream of the East. It appears, on the other hand, that the Orient buys from the Occident such things as guns, hats, celluloid collars, sock-stretchers and psychological novels. We are forced to remark, then, that these two impervious ones are (though hopelessly, like Héloïse and Abélard) in love with one another.

Europe, Asia.

The more optimistic would like to make of them a couple whose union could be celebrated in a song like the one which, after asserting wantonly that:

The sheath is made but for the knife,

concludes:

And the girl but for the boy.

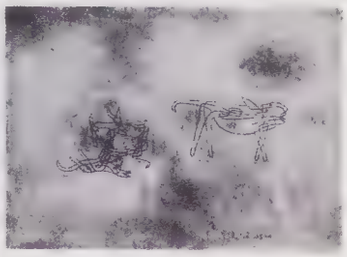
And so, although Paul Klee has proven to us with three grains of sand that the skyscrapers of New York, the *Galeries Lafayette* of Paris, the astonishing noctambulant bulimia of Berlin, the electric signs of London are nothing for the eyes of the mind, nothing to the ears of the imagination; though he has made limitless eyes break out on the foreheads of the most minuscule creatures and, despite the algae, which he has freed from their last rock, in spite of so many beings, plants and things that are, in their imponderable sur-reality, less susceptible of denial than our houses, our gas burners, our cafés and the meat of our daily or weekly loves according to the resources of civilized constitutions, all the marvels that he dispenses must not be bastardized, perverted or utilized either for this cause or that.

We refuse to see in him one of those simplistic fakirs. He is the very opposite of those music-hall initiates or prophets for old British theosophical virgins.

Fig. 4. Paul Klee, Cosmic Flora, 1923. *Watercolor on chalk grounding, 10¾ x 14-3/8". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

Fig. 5. Paul Klee, Arab Song, 1932. *Oil on canvas, 36 x 25¼". Courtesy The Phillips Collection, Washington.*

Fig. 6. Paul Klee, She Howls, We Play, 1928. *Oil on canvas, 17 x 22-1/8". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*



The way, then, is free for the young European to sing the brand-new and already classical song of his anxieties, free for the cosmetic Adonis to sing his love for suitcases, for the *wagon-lit,* for speed, and (whether his bronzed brother in the antipodes plays Buddha dead or alive) the verbiage of rhetorical journalists, the finicking of critics and their sophisticated prattle, so much architecture in empty space, can never prevail against one drop of spontaneity.

Paul Klee, an oriental?

Yes, beyond a doubt, since some of his pictures seem woven in homage to the freshest visions of the Thousand and One Nights.[9]

But let him lead us among the beds of flowers along secret ways to the cavern whose stone age enlivened its walls with aurochs and reindeer.[10] And we come back our arms laden with a bouquet of fossils plucked in the incandescent shadow of trees of salt.

The work of Klee is a complete museum of dreams.

The only museum without dust.

Even ashes turn here to a prairie around miniature villages like those that children build with their constructor toys.

Space that ancient prejudice, is finally exposed, for cosmogonies are put to work as streets and the Milky Way as a river in this magnificent Lilliputian paradise whose animals, and their men, all nerves, hail the conflagration of flying fish.

Not one pebble can be hard-headed, turn a deaf ear to this light.

Here strange surprises hatch continually.

And because a painter was able to draw, on his thumbnail, walls reminiscent of Babylon and Palmyra,[11] the sick who have peered into his canvases will be able, in revenge for fever, silence and immobility, to find on the ceiling of their room whole miles and miles of stories. A little piece of flaking plaster, no more is needed to unveil the most vertiginous of secrets.

This Paul Klee knows, whom neither arabesques nor virtuosity could tempt.

The simplest material—words or colours—serves as dragoman between beyond and seer. Poetry is the discovery of unsuspected relationships between one element and another.[12] The painter gifted with poetry can find in the driest geometry the ladders he needs for his deep diving. He climbs, goes down, goes up again and, on the last step, because the key is gone that was to open this door on a level with the sky, on a level with the wind, Paul Klee has only to look through the keyhole to discover in two square, yawning centimeters a world of stars that men had thought were lost.[13]

There is no measure more. I mean that units of length and weight and volume can no more serve as measures. We no longer believe in the metric system. No one can mark off dreams, desires in ells.

Still better, I no longer even believe in those metaphorical commonplaces in which our sloth was used to indulge without fear of surprise.

At twenty-nine years by the gong I am even beginning to leave off believing in the raven, bird of misfortune, since, this morn-

ing, one of these *nevermores* came to perch, not above my chamber door but on my balcony.[14]

This sombre personage had a beak of the most lovely of yellows, called canary. He had on such fine red boots that in spite of myself I thought of a paradoxical bride who, among her tulles, displayed a face made up in emerald green and feet shod in violet.

This raven of the heights answers to the disconcerting name of *Choucas*, as if he were no more than a cocaine-sniffing lady of doubtful standing.

Most decidedly the conservatives have gone too far, and if they have the least sense of justice they will once and for all not be surprised that Paul Klee despises mountains with peaks 16,974 feet high, the Falls of Niagara and all animals whose reputation is too well established, even if they pass for ferocious, such as lions, those travelling salesmen of the desert with their light brown cravats.

While the romantics of the modern taste extol pig iron, reinforced concrete and all metallurgies with pretentions to the broad-jump record,[15] Paul Klee, immune to the slightest vertigo, follows a single hair tossed between sky and earth. His eye has grasped the miracle of colours, the total miracle of all the colours in a drop of water, the simple, the famous drop of water that makes the vase run over and the ocean and, on the day of glorious wrath, the bottomless resignation of mankind.

Paul Klee's painting declares itself to be post-diluvian, but before that flood which we hope will bring to completion the so-inadequate work of the first.

And long live inundations.

You were right, Paul Klee, to dedicate this red ladder lost in the dove-gray ether as a tribute to a poet.[16]

This ladder is the very stairway, the only one, which can lead us up to the trampolin from which we shall leap, feet together, into the impossible, for the time has finally come to unhook the moon.

But, if the house where fish live is called an aquarium and the one that shelters the palm trees a palmarium, I shall call celarium the house in which each one of your canvases is another mansion in memory of your miraculous draughts of fishes, teeming fish become bouquets of stars.

Then, even when exiled in the land of habit, of men in flesh and bone, of mountains of stones and trees that are all too clearly tree and stone, one has only to close his eyes, as in childhood when one discovers that the dark is a lie, for, under sealed eyelids, a thousand fires are lit, minuscule and yet greater than our accredited stars.

Touching fraternity of poets.

To illustrate the delicate and potent magic of Paul Klee, sing this line of Saint-Léger-Léger:

And the sun is not named, but his power is among us.[17]

1. This translation was first published in *Art and Literature, An International Quarterly*, No. 8, Spring 1966, pp. 154-60. We are indebted to Editions Gallimard for their permission to reprint the text.
2. Renée Riese Hubert, *Writers as Art Critics—three views of the paintings of Paul Klee*, in *Contemporary Literature*, Winter 1977, 18:1, pp. 75-92.
3. This introductory passage establishes, together with the obvious attack at bourgeois mentality and values, one of the principle features of Crevel's interpretation of Klee's art: the superiority of small, even infinitesimal objects and structures over colossal ones. Crevel chose the hippocampus as a symbol of

Fig. 7. Paul Klee, Mural, 1924. *Brush drawing on cloth on cardboard, 10 x 21¾". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

Fig. 9. Paul Klee, Ascension, 1925. *Transfer drawing on watercolor. Present location unknown.*

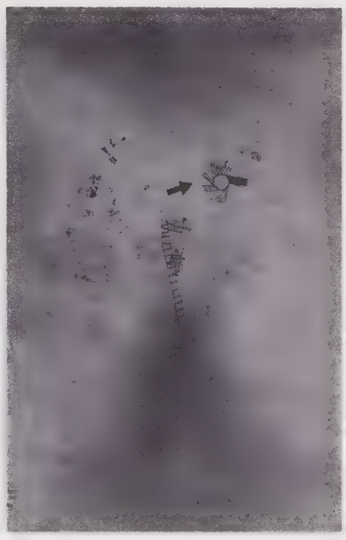
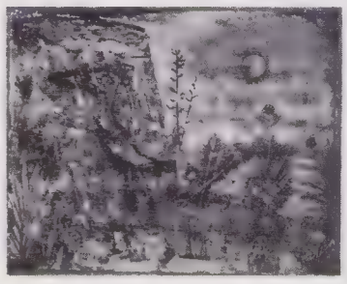


Fig. 8. Paul Klee, The Bird Pep, 1925. *Oil and watercolor. Collection Rolf Buergi, Berne.*



Klee's free-floating imagination and describes the philistine adversary of this artistic mentality as a mastodon or whale. The mastodon may have been suggested to him by the first illustration included in the Gallimard edition of his essay, the bemuzzled *Company at Table* of 1907 (Paris, coll. Bernard Poissonnier; Fig. 2). Throughout the essay, the juxtaposition of small, poetic objects and colossal and trite ones hints at the ultimate victory of the imagination over reason, of the progressive spirit over bourgeois reaction.
4. Cf. *Fish Magic* (1925; The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Arensberg coll.; Fig. 3).
5. For each of these astonishing combinations of words and images through which Crevel evokes Klee's pictorial world, an equivalent can be found among his paintings: *graffiti of the beyond*: *Collection of Signs*, 1924 (private coll., U.S.A.), *Creations of hypnosis*: *Head (before awakening)*, 1929 (Kunstmuseum Bern, Rupf Foundation); *Flowers of ectoplasm*: *Cosmic Flora*, 1923 (Klee Foundation, Berne; Fig. 4).
6. Cf. this passage with the following sentence from Klee's lecture *On Modern Art* (1924; unpublished at the time of Crevel's writing): "Then (the artist) permits himself the thought that the process of creation can today hardly be complete and he sees the act of world creation stretching from the past to the future. Genesis eternal!" (This and the quotation in note 13 are taken from: Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, translated by Paul Findlay, London 1947.)
7. Within the context of Crevel's polemic against all that is colossal in scale, his attack at the metric system has the special meaning of an attack against the bourgeois habits of amassing wealth, replacing quality by quantity, of imperialist competition and materialism.
8. This alludes to an article by Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Two Lobes* (in *Mountain Paths*, translated by A. Teixeira de Mattos, New York 1919, pp. 179-87). The central passage runs as follows (p. 186): "It seems that there are in fact in the human brain an eastern lobe and a western lobe, which have never acted at the same time. The one produces, here, reason and consciousness; the other secrets, yonder, intuition, religion and subconsciousness. One reflects only the infinite and the unknowable; the other is interested only in what it is able to delimit, in what it may hope to understand. . . .We are indebted to (the western lobe) for extraordinary progress in the material sciences, but also for such catastrophes as we are undergoing today. . .The time would seem to have come to awaken the paralyzed lobe; but we have neglected it so greatly that we no longer quite know what it is capable of doing." As will become clear from the following, Crevel rejects not only the infiltration of the East with the worst of Western civilization, but also the Westerner's fashionable and journalistic appropriation of half-digested Eastern mysticism. In order to set free the truly creative forces of the human spirit, the Surrealist must delve into greater depths of the mind than those occupied by any kind of religion. Note how in passing, Crevel connects this line of thought with a jibe at conventional sexual morality.
9. Cf. *Arab Song*, 1932 (The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C.; Fig. 5). For a later view on Klee's orientalism, see the following excerpt from Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee* (New York, n.d., p. 380f.): "Whether or not there are actual blood ties behind it, Klee's affinity with the Orient is so obvious. . . .His 'sign pictures' and 'plant-script-pictures' have striking affinities with Kufic inscriptions and manuscripts of the Koran. . . .The point here is not simply his continual use of Oriental themes, but rather the thoroughgoing interpenetration of two different ways of thinking. And this we find not only in a picture such as *Arab Song* (1932), but in many others whose titles betray no inkling of it. . ."
10. Cf. *She howls, we play*, 1928 (Klee Foundation, Berne; Fig. 6).
11. Cf. *Mural*, 1924 (Klee Foundation, Berne; Fig. 7).
12. This definition echoes not only Lautréamont's famous "chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table", but also the following lines of Pierre Reverdy, quoted by Breton in his *First Manifesto of Surrealism*: "The image is a pure creation of the mind. It cannot be born from a comparison but from a juxtaposition of two more or less distant realities." (André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, transl. from the French by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, Ann Arbor 1969, p. 20.)
13. Cf. Klee, *On Modern Art*: "Then, flying off to the infinite, he thinks: it is very probable that, on other stars, creation has produced an entirely different result."
14. Cf. *The Bird Pep*, 1926 (Rolf Burgi coll., Berne; Fig. 8).
15. This is a jibe at Léger, Le Corbusier, and the aesthetics of L'Esprit Nouveau. Cf. Crevel, *Dali ou l'Anti-Obscurantisme* (Paris 1931, p. 6f., transl. by the present writer): "The sceptic himself. . .doesn't he sit down on a nickle-plated chair to read Proust in the shadow of a painting representing the idyl of a ball-bearing and a piston. And certainly, the psychology of the hair on the ass split in four and the aesthetic prejudice of a painting by Fernand Léger are samples of the present bourgeois culture. . ."
16. Klee has dedicated a watercolor with transfer drawing, *Ascension*, 1925 (present location unknown; Fig. 9) to the poet Léon-Paul Fargue. This is reproduced in *Hommage a Léon-Paul Fargue, Les Feuilles Libres*, 8:45-46, June 1927 (with a contribution by Crevel). In Crevel's description, his memory of *L'Ascension* commingles with another work by Klee, which is illustrated in the Gallimard edition of his essay, *Limits of Reason*, 1927 (formerly coll. Theodor Werner).
17. Alexis Saint-Léger Léger = Saint-John Perse. The line (correctly: "Et le soleil n'est *point* nomme. . .") is from his *Anabase*, I.

THE ISSUE OF CHILDHOOD IN THE ART OF PAUL KLEE

O. K. WERCKMEISTER

The profound historical changes—spanning the three epochs of the German Empire, Weimar Republic, and National Socialism—to which Klee's career was subject appear particularly clearly in his position on childhood. The issue of childhood and children's art was never capricious for Klee; rather, it was culturally determined.

Fig. 1. Paul Klee, Girl with Doll, 1905.

The affinity of art and childhood has come to be seen as one of the most salient features of Paul Klee's work. It is often acclaimed as an achievement of that ideal coincidence between extreme sophistication and unbridled spontaneity for which modern art is valued in today's accepted culture.[1] Klee seems to embody the definition that "Genius is merely childhood, deliberately retrieved," by which Baudelaire in 1860 had characterized the painter of modern life as someone who possessed the analytical capacity of transmitting the intense immediacy of experience which children have but cannot express.[2] On the other hand, throughout modern culture the quest for childhood has been a part of critical attempts to break through prevailing conventions and regain natural existence. Childhood has thus been used as a controversial issue, subject to historical circumstances that prompted its anti-cultural thrust to be aimed at changing targets.

Klee's career spanned three historical epochs as radically different as the German Empire of 1871, the Weimar Republic, and the National Socialist dictatorship. The historical changes to which it was subject appear particularly clearly in his position on childhood, which varied more drastically over the years than is realized today. In 1912, Klee had stated his conviction that "the primordial origins of art are to be found at home in the nursery," and that modern artists ought to take the "art" of children as a profoundly serious example.[3] But in 1930 he resisted any attempt to hold him to an affinity with children's drawing with the admonition: "Don't relate my works to those of children. They are worlds apart."[4] Klee's change from one position to the other is the subject of this essay,[5] in which the available testimonies on the issue will be assembled and discussed.[6]

1900—1914

The Controversial Issue of Child-like Art

Klee's emphatically affirmative statement of 1912 is part of a review he wrote for the Swiss magazine *Die Alpen* about the double exhibition of the *Neue Künstlervereinigung München* and its offshoot, the *Blaue Reiter* group, held in the Thannhauser gallery at Munich in December 1911.[7]

> For there are still primordial origins of art, as you would rather find them in the ethnographic museum or at home in the nursery (don't laugh, reader), children can do it too, and that is by no means devastating for the most recent tendencies,[8] but there is positive wisdom in this fact. The more helpless these children are, the more instructive art they offer; for already here there is corruption: if children start to absorb developed works of art or even to emulate them. Parallel phenomena are the drawings of the insane, and thus madness is no appropriate invective either. In truth all this is to be taken much more seriously, *if* the art of today is to be reformed.

The terms "corruption" and "reform" indicate the critical intention of Klee's text. As he refused to take childlikeness for an "invective," he joined a two-way polemic,[9] in which a reproach advanced by conservative critics against modern art was turned around to become an ideal. To speak of an "art" of children unspoiled by culture was to answer the common accusation that the works of modern artists resembled the pictures of children who had not yet learned how to draw.[10] Klee's friend Hans Bloesch recognized this polemical interdependence when he wrote the first essay on the artist in the same issue of *Die Alpen*[11]:

> 'There are drawings of a child who has not yet learned anything.' [...] 'That's how a child draws ... who has never thoroughly viewed a picture book.' Here, I believe, we touch the central point of the new art which searches a way in Klee. He and the painters who aim at similar goals[12] ... see in the still uninfluenced art of the child and of the primitive peoples a guidepost for their own creative work. [...] That one ... can label [Klee's] drawings childish scribblings, appears to us a reproach only to be raised by someone who does not expect a reply to it.

Klee's own text is just such a reply—"don't laugh"; "by no means devastating"—stated in defiant terms. Its key phrase, "children can do it too," had been, as it were, lifted out of a sneering exhibition comment and converted from an "insult" in-

Fig. 2. Paul Klee, Concert Hall, 1911.

to "positive wisdom." Conversely, "developed works of art" stood accused of causing the "corruption" of spontaneous picture-making. Thus, the idea of child-like art had become an ambivalent term in an ongoing controversy between modern artists and the public.

In his review, Klee was taking up the position of the *Blaue Reiter* group, who had for the first time extended the modern appreciation of primitive art to the works of children.[13] Kandinsky formulated it, rather dogmatically, in his essay "On the Question of Form" which he published in the almanac *Der Blaue Reiter* later in the same year.[14] According to him, "the inner sound" of things, their spiritual reality, was directly accessible to children, insofar as they had not yet been taught the universal practicality which obscured that reality in contemporary culture.

> Thus in every child's drawing, without exception, the inner sound of the object exposes itself spontaneously [. . .] There is an unconscious, enormous power in the child . . . which places the child's work on the same level as that of the adult (and often on a much higher one!).[15]

From this it followed that the artist, "who throughout his life is like a child in many ways," was entitled and obliged to ignore the established tradition of art which in the case of children had proved to be the spoiler of natural talent. Thus, Kandinsky made the notion of children's art part of his all-out attack on what he perceived as "bourgeois" culture.

Kandinsky's categorical equation between the art of children and the kind of modern art which he projects is by no means, however, fully accepted in Klee's review. Conversely, Klee's key term "primordial origins of art" does not occur in Kandinsky's text. Klee, rather than linking up child and adult artist in an abstract analogy which disregards an essential biological difference, attempts to establish a precedent back in time to which the artist ought to turn in order to feel again the natural impulse for making pictures. The art of children, together with the art of primitives, gives evidence of a natural history of art in which individual biography and the evolution of mankind coincide. This is an alternative tradition to the discredited tradition of culture.

Klee's Quest for the Tradition of Childhood

In 1911, when Klee was thirty-two years old, he made a complete transcription of the various diaries which he had kept since 1898.[16] It became a systematic survey of his life, in which he attempted to clarify for himself the significance of earlier events and thoughts with later hindsight comments. These diaries show too many recurring worries about his slow and hesitant development as an artist, too many introspective probings of his own intellectual and emotional maturity at any given stage, too many reassuring reviews of his capabilities and accomplishments, for him to have wanted to merely reenact the lost spontaneity of childhood. But at the beginning of the transcription he placed a notice about his birth and the various places where he had lived as a child, followed by thirty-six "memories of childhood" which start at age two and end at age twelve. The actual diary entries start at age fifteen. Thus, in 1911, Klee in effect designed his autobiography and, in the process, reached back into his childhood as far as he could.

In the same year, no doubt as part of the same effort to organize his life in both directions, Klee started his oeuvre catalog, which he conceived of as "a big, exact inventory of all my artistic products since childhood."[17] At the beginning, he placed a selection of eighteen drawings which he had made as a child, between the ages of three and ten, and which his older sister Mathilde had collected and preserved.[18] These drawings he mounted on cardboard, as he used to do with all his later drawings which he counted as finished works. Some he even signed.[19] Thus Klee elevated his own childhood drawings onto the level of works of art, but at the same time, through the chronological dimension of the oeuvre catalog, identified them as past origins, rather than simply equating them with the work which he was doing as a grown-up artist. This is in line with the position he took in his review of the *Blaue Reiter* exhibition.[20] Indeed, Klee reached for his childhood drawings just at the moment when his sense of progress as an artist was at its most acute. The oeuvre catalog is as much an account book of that progress as are the unified diaries, particularly at this point in time when Klee started and maintained them both concurrently.[21] The biographical symmetry which is apparent in the time span covered by the introductory materials in both may even extend to the number of selections, eighteen childhood drawings and thirty-six "memories of childhood," or one drawing for every two pieces of text.

Thus, when Klee was writing about "primordial origins of art" in his exhibition review of early 1912, he was referring to a profound survey of his own life and work undertaken the year before, no doubt under the impact of Kandinsky and the other artists who shortly later formed the *Blaue Reiter* group and had revalidated the art of children. The controversial association between art and childhood had, in fact, a direct, personal relevance for his own life and vocation as an artist which it had never had for Kandinsky. The curbing and diversion of the original, spontaneously creative urge of the child to make pictures, which both he and Kandinsky in their published texts condemned as oppression and corruption, had happened to Klee himself. When he was three years old, his grandmother, who used to paint and embroider as a pastime, encouraged him to draw with crayons.[22] She died when he was five, and no other relative sustained the interest in his drawing, so that he came to feel "orphaned as a picture-maker."[23] Instead, he began to receive intensive violin lessons,[24] no doubt at the initiative of his father, a music teacher. He continued drawing occasionally, but was left on his own with it. One of the "childhood memories" later included in the introduction of his diary is about an incident which occurred when he was six or seven. He was sitting in his uncle's restaurant, drawing a horse and a carriage, when a guest asked whether he did not notice that something was missing in the picture. The little boy, with childhood concerns about sexuality, thought that the guest was referring to the horse's genitals and remained recalcitrantly silent. But the adult had meant the thills without which the horse could not draw the carriage.[25] This was exactly the kind of pedagogical interference into a child's serious picture-making which Kandinsky denounced in his *Blaue Reiter* essay.[26] Three years later, the boy Paul Klee had submitted to the practice of accurate 'life-drawing' and picture-copying which then prevailed in elementary and high-school art instruction. At the age of nine and ten, he deliberately tried his hand at drawing overly intricate perspectival views of buildings and streets, which show a painful concern for accuracy only imperfectly accomplished, and no trace of effort to be inventive or expressive.[27] After three more years, in high school, Klee was further reduced to meticulous copying of landscapes in topographical calendars and illustrated books, which he subsequently emulated in his own independent studies after nature.[28]

Later in life, Klee kept his distance from these drawings, for he felt that he had done them "without infusing them with as much as a hint of a more profound sense."[29] In the crucial year 1911, he called them "not artistic drawings,"[30] "lacking productive independence."[31] He excluded them from his retrospective oeuvre catalog, along with the later drawing studies from his academy classes.[32] With this distinction Klee negatively reaffirmed his association of art and childhood, against the con-

Fig. 3. Paul Klee, Rider and Outrider, 1911.

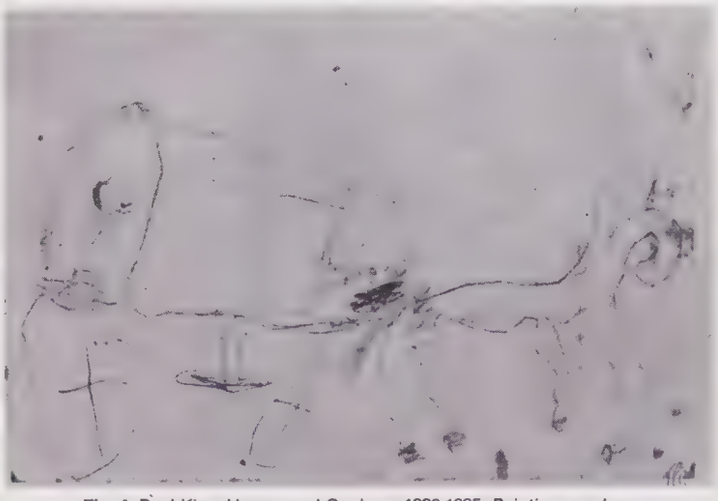


Fig. 4. Paul Klee, Horses and Carriage, 1883-1885. *Painting on glass.*

ventional art education which he had been given as an adolescent and young man. And yet, year after year he had put a tenacious working effort into these landscape drawings, making them in their own way so sophisticated that they earned him enthusiastic acceptance by the director of the private art school at Munich which he entered in October 1898. At the very same moment, Klee already looked at them with disdain.[33]

By contrast, the musical instruction of the boy Paul Klee, as is well known, soon attained such spectacular results that at the age of ten he was made an extraordinary member of the city orchestra of Berne and joined in its public performances. The different ways in which his training in conventional techniques of drawing and music was conducted by the adults responsible for his education, and the equally different ways in which his work in both these arts was recognized by the society in which he lived, point to a dichotomy which was to shape his future career as an artist. In the bourgeois milieu to which Klee's family belonged, the common artistic education of a talented child was in music, not in drawing or in painting. Private musical tutors were an established profession, tutors in the pictorial arts were not. As a result, the young Klee's prevailing notion of artistic accomplishment attainable for a child was bound to be directed toward music rather than painting. By contrast, his drawings, perhaps no less acclaimed for the technical ability which they displayed, were only perceived as promising tokens of an adult career on the condition of many years of hard academic work. The fact that during Klee's childhood and youth music was cultivated, and drawing neglected or tolerated at best, cannot be seen without consequence for his decision, as an adult, to choose the latter over the former when he made up his mind to become an artist. It is to be seen as an emancipation from the musical culture of his family, and beyond that, as the first step of an emancipation from art as part of accepted culture. Klee even saw it as an opposition against what was demanded of him at home. "Only the forbidden pleased me.

Fig. 5. Paul Klee, Place, place pour le reverend pere colonel, 1911.

Fig. 6. Paul Klee, Horse Race I, 1911.

Drawing and Writing."[34] He perpetuated this attitude in his formative years as an artist, when he was aiming for nothing so much as unconventional, personal forms of his own.

The dichotomy between music and painting does not seem to have been observed by Klee commentators or scholars, who usually celebrate what they perceive as a musicality of his painting in which both of his talents coincide.[35] And yet, Klee the reproductive musician remained as traditional as Klee the creative painter was revolutionary. When he made his career decision, he seems to have viewed the music of the 'classical' period as a peak followed by decline.[36] All through his life, he enthusiastically performed the great works of German and Austrian masters of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Conversely, he took no active interest in the radical break with musical tradition which his contemporaries Schönberg and Webern were bringing about.[37] If one relates this persistent dichotomy in Klee's attitude toward tradition in painting and music to what had happened to his two concurrent artistic talents during his youth, his decision to become a painter appears as a reassertion of childhood spontaneity against artistic convention.

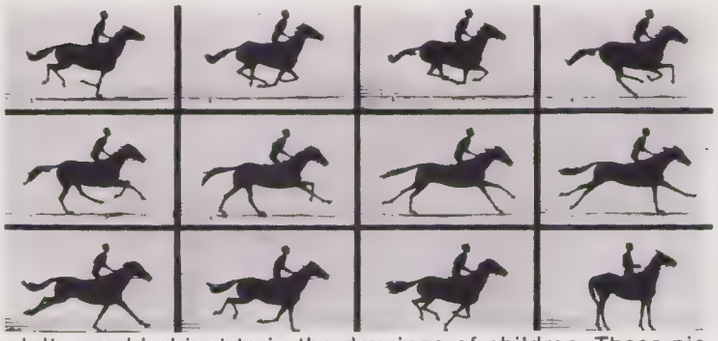
Child-like Art as a Refusal of Convention

When Klee had finished the series of etchings on which he had worked from 1903 to 1905 and which he regarded as his first genuinely personal artistic accomplishment, he nevertheless wrote in his diary that he felt he had to start "something entirely new."[38] From this point in time dates the first known testimony about his deliberate association of art and childhood. In a letter which Klee wrote to his bride Lily Stumpf on March 31, 1905, he reports about a pencil study which he had done that evening and adjudged to be a successful "composition":

> It consists of two wretched children who occupy themselves with dolls, no philosophy, no literature, only lines and forms, done in the children's style, that is, as children would draw it. [. . .] It would yield a first work in the new sense . . .[39]

The drawing which would display what Klee in 1905 considered as "the children's style" has not yet been identified. But a glass painting from the same year, entitled *Girl with Doll* (Fig. 1),[40] shows the same subject, and may also be similar in style. It forms part of a group of glass paintings from 1905 of the same subject matter and appearance.[41] In these paintings, caricature-like distortion of both proportion and physiognomy, and deliberately clumsy but firm outlining appear as results of an attempt, not to be simple or primitive, but to escape the look of cultured art. If Klee regarded this form as "children's style," he must have meant to defiantly revalidate the clumsiness that

Fig. 7. Eadweard Muybridge, Phase Photograph of Galloping Horse.



adults would object to in the drawings of children. These pictures are only one of many attempts, on the part of Klee, to find forms untainted by convention. Toward the end of 1905 he related in his diary the experience of "the first unambiguous moment of my life" in which he felt "no intellect, no ethos," an experience he likened to that of "a child in the totality of the world."[42] Two months later, in January of 1906, he wrote down, in semi-poetic form, a dream in which child-like feeling is directly related to artistic ambition:

> Dream. I flew home where the beginning is. It started with brooding and nail-chewing. Then I smelled something or tasted something. [. . .] If now a delegation came to me and ceremoniously bowed before the artist, pointing thankfully to his works, I would hardly be surprised. For I was there, where the beginning is. I was with my adored Madam Primitive Cell, that means as much as being fertile.[43]

The passage, in which childhood appears together with two other key notions of Klee's artistic self-reflection, flying and sexuality, projects artistic success as the result of a regress to primordial sensibility.

When Bloesch seven years later raised and answered the issue of child-like art, he specifically referred to two of Klee's drawings whose extremely sophisticated abstraction could hardly be likened to actual children's work (Fig. 2).[44] Klee himself, however, was prepared to use the notion of childhood for an even more radical assertion of his independence from tradition. Nothing would be more logical than to expect him to have linked up his production of these years with the drawings of his own childhood, above all with those that he had included in his oeuvre catalog. Yet this was not what happened.[45] The one instance where such an adaptation can be observed is instructive as an exception, because Klee corrected it immediately. It is a study of two riders for one of the *Candide* illustrations, drawn in 1911 and transposed to a glass painting (Fig. 3). It appears to be based on a drawing of horses dragging a cab which Klee had done as a boy of four to six and had now included in the catalog (Fig. 4).[46] The continuous but unstructured, wavering outline which in this drawing circumscribes the horse's almost jointless silhouette, obviously results from a concentrated, determined effort of the little child. The 32-year-old artist seems to have transcribed it in a somewhat purified version, to give an elementary impetus to the two striding and galloping riders incised on the back of the glass. But in the finished illustration, *Place, place pour le révérend père colonel* (Fig. 5),[47] hardly any trace of this deliberate simplicity remains. Instead, it is based on another, contemporary drawing (Fig. 6),[48] in which Klee has adapted Muybridge's famous sequential photographs of the movements of a galloping horse (Fig. 7)[49] to an extremely fast and subtle movement of his pen.[50] The expressive exaggeration of these two fast moving riders derives from the opposite of children's simplicity, that is, from an exact and even mechanized observation of visual reality. Only the curved forelegs of both horses may be traces of Klee's earlier, child-like version which the glass painting has preserved.[51] But they are expressive, not simplifying features. The change is a programmatic one, for it amounts to a rejection, on the part of Klee, of the limitation of his own childhood forms when he was aiming for high-pitched expressive exaggeration of visual reality in the *Candide* illustrations.[52] The subtle, literary readability of these expressive figurations could hardly be given up for a renewed simplicity. What Klee wrote in his diaries during 1911 and 1912 shows no intention to relapse into simpler stages, especially as he clearly felt that he had started to escape oppressive tradition already seven or eight years earlier. At this time, therefore, Klee's quest for a childhood ideal of art, to which his activities and statements testify, had to be more than just a vindication of his own beginnings.

The Reversal of Kerschensteiner's Theory of Children's Drawing

The dogmatic intensity with which Kandinsky insisted on the artistic merit of children's picture-making uncorrupted by convention is not borne out by the specimens of children's drawing which he and Marc had reproduced as illustrations in the *Blaue Reiter* almanac.[53] One wonders how Kandinsky could have entrusted these pictures with illustrating his fundamental doctrine about the spiritual force that children who are left to their own spontaneous creativity were capable of achieving. They are evidently not by small children, and they don't seem to go very far in their deviation from adult realism (Fig. 8). Rather, they appear as awkward imitations of adult imagery, and Kandinsky may have taken them for unabashed distortions. Presumably their awkwardness was felt much more strongly in 1912 than it would today. These pictures point to the antagonistic, anti-cultural sense of Kandinsky's notion of childhood art. He may have claimed to trace art back to its stages of natural purity, but was in fact using the imagery of children as one of his critical challenges to the art of established conventions.

In spite of Klee's professed affinity to the *Blaue Reiter* group in the matter of childhood art, the children's pictures reproduced in the almanac remained without effect on his own drawing. He was already several years past the stage of caricaturistic distortion. From 1912 on, he used a completely new rectilinear schematization of figures, in which the bodies are built up as constructs of overcrossing diagonals, with the waist as the point of intersection (Fig. 9).[54] This scheme served him for a wide variety of expressive movements. It appears similar to the examples of schematic figure-drawing in the scientific literature on children's picture-making which had begun to be published in the first decade of the century. At that time, several ambitious attempts had been made to scientifically and statistically investigate children's drawing as a natural, physiologically and psychologically determined activity, and to observe its natural growth, independent of pedagogical interference, through large-scale experiments and sample-collections.[55] In Germany, the three outstanding undertakings in this regard were those of the superintendent of public instruction of the municipal school district of Munich, Georg Kerschensteiner, begun in 1903; of the art historian Karl Lamprecht at the Seminar of Universal History and Civilization of the University of Leipzig, begun in 1904; and of the psychologist William Stern at the University of Breslau, begun in 1905.[56] These inquiries had very different purposes, but in each, the artistic activity of children was taken seriously, in order to arrive at far-reaching conclusions about art, humanity, and education. They did not pave the way for public acceptance of the work of modern artists who were veering from tradition into 'primitive' spontaneity. The assumption that they did implies the comfortable hypothesis of a quickly self-adjusting, comprehensive culture of the early 20th century in which art soon connects to basic social concerns. Rather, it appears that childlikeness was first raised as a charge by the public against modern art, and then countered by modern artists and their advocates, through reference to the scientific findings about the art of children.

Klee seems to have been the first artist to explicitly connect his work with these investigations. In the city of Munich, where he had settled permanently in 1906, anyone interested in the question of children's art was bound to encounter, directly or indirectly, the work of Georg Kerschensteiner, the school superintendent of the city, who in 1905 had published his findings and conclusions in a comprehensive book entitled *The Development of the Drawing Talent.*[57] As Kerschensteiner wrote in his preface, he had set out to redefine the principles on which the drawing instruction of children in the elementary and high schools of Munich should be founded, but had ended up in a giant empirical survey aimed at finding out how the "graphic expressiveness of the *uninfluenced* child develops from the primitive scheme up to the accomplished spatial representation."[58] Through his office he was able to collect about half a

Fig. 8. Child's Watercolor, as reproduced in *Der Blaue Reiter,* 1912.

million drawings by the 58,000 school children of Munich, and to ensure as best as he could that they were done without interference from the teachers. From this mass of material, classified according to age, sex, and social class, Kerschensteiner concluded that the child's drawing talent developed naturally and regularly toward the representation of visible reality in space.[59] Children were bound to acquire that capability as part of their natural growth, the duration of which varied as much as the degree of accomplishment that they would finally reach. Kerschensteiner therefore viewed the initial stage of children's image-making negatively, as a stage from which they would move away by themselves. He called it "schematism," the "stage of the transcription of the conceptual characteristics" of an object.[60] Here a child would attempt to render "what it knows" of the object, in fact only very few of its salient characteristics, perhaps no more than one. The two essential aspects of the stage of schematism, as Kerschensteiner conceived it, were line and verbal language. Because he held that children learn to speak long before they learn to differentiate their visual perception of reality, he saw conceptual schematism as their first natural approach to drawing pictures. In Kerschensteiner's evaluation of childhood drawing, critique and vindication complement each other. Children cannot be faulted for the aesthetic shortcomings of their pictures, because these are no more than transitional stages of natural development and have nothing to do with art, which implies final accomplishment.[61]

The plates in Kerschensteiner's book contain specimens of 'schematic' figure drawing by small children which seem rather similar to the diagonal cross schemes of figures which Klee applied in his drawings from 1912 onwards (Fig. 10). For Kerschensteiner, they were the extreme of undeveloped schematism. The six-year-old girl who had drawn these figures, he wrote, "possesses only this one scheme of a man."[62] It remains an open question whether Klee derived his peculiar mode of figure schematization from Kerschensteiner's reproductions. In any event, since Kerschensteiner had the authority to put his precepts into practice in every public school of Munich, most children's drawings which Klee could have seen there were likely to be the result of a teaching based on his directives, which would have permitted little children to engage in this kind of 'schematism' without obstruction. Nevertheless, if Klee ever wanted to read about children's drawing, he was bound to come across Kerschensteiner's weighty volume with its fundamental title and its 847 reproductions on 141 full-size plates.[63]

However, Kerschensteiner's theory of the natural development of the drawing talent from schematism to realism, meticulously expounded as the result of an overwhelming effort at empirical observation, and implying no less than a scientific description of the natural growth of man toward making art, was exactly the opposite of both Kandinsky's and Klee's convictions about the relevance of children's drawing for modern art. They would have decried the later stages of the ostensibly undirected progress toward the accomplishment of pictures that are "appearance-adequate" and then even "form-adequate,"[64] as an enforced deviation of the child's creativity. Klee in particular, if he saw the book, would have been struck by the resemblance between the meticulously realistic renderings of figures, animals, or landscape motifs by Kerschensteiner's outstanding pupils and the calendar copies of his own schoolboy years which he had all but rejected as viable steps in his artistic career, but which would have appeared to Kerschensteiner as the peak of precocious juvenile achievement had he ever seen them.[65] Thus, Klee's adaptation of Kerschensteiner's early stage of pre-artistic, infantile schematism for the purposes of his own adult art[66] runs contrary to the author's intentions. Kerschensteiner used a second drawing by the six-year-old girl, depicting a snowball match (Fig. 11), to point out that even with such a potentially dramatic subject, the child at the 'schematic' stage remained confined to meaningless stereotype repetition.[67] Klee, on the contrary, developed out of the diagonal figure scheme a wide variety of flexible movements, expressive gestures, and excited compositions. The emotional intensity of these drawings is indicated by their especially funny or enigmatic titles.[68] It is as if Klee had set out to disprove Kerschensteiner's warning that it would be wrong to see in children's drawings of the 'schematic' stage any intended psychic expression since the scheme as such remained

identical.[69] Kerschensteiner, of course, would have recognized expression only in the shape of a clearly differentiated visual subject, whereas for the artists of the *Blaue Reiter* expression was carried by form as such. Klee would presumably have been able to see the six-year-old girl's drawing of a snowball match, along with its battle line of big and small attackers, as an expressive panorama of the strong and the weak. In a drawing of 1913 (Fig. 12)[70] he lined up six figures based on diagonal cross schemes and other schematic structures in a similar composition, scrambled them with uncharacteristically fuzzy, tentative lines, and filled them in with plump representational features which look coarser and simpler than in most of his other drawings of that time. These mannikins with oversized heads and intensely staring eyes, jumping up and down and gesticulating with their arms, are *Children as Actors,* according to Klee's title. Whatever he intended them to act, he obviously wished to demonstrate that children's play was to be viewed as expressive and meaningful. Children's acting takes the form of children's drawing, intentionally displayed in its simplicity.[71] Klee was to use such schematic figurines often in his later pictures of theatrical performances.[72] By 1916, the triangular subdivision of the bodies was neatly fused into the multicolored, semi-cubist space perspective of a stage on which miraculous spectacles are presented.[73] Generally, most of the features of his later works that may be compared to children's pictures are schematic ones.[74]

Klee seems to have called the new expressive mode of his drawings of 1912 and 1913 "a naive style."[75] It is tantamount to a reversal of the philosophy on which Kerschensteiner's huge survey of children's drawing was predicated.[76] Klee must have seen the schematism of children as an alternative to rather than as a preliminary stage toward "appearance-adequate" representation, to which he had submitted in his youth at the cost of all but any spontaneity and which was now rejected by all the modern artists with whom he associated himself. In 1912 there could be no question for Klee to forgo the personal, expressive subtlety which had been his aim for a decade. In accepting Kerschensteiner's stage-division of the development of image-making, but reversing the evaluation that Kerschensteiner had given to it, he took what amounts to a theoretical, scientific approach to the problem of regaining childhood spontaneity in his art. The unusually careful composition and execution of the first drawings in the "naive style" of 1912 shows that this approach entailed no return to the technical simplicity with which children actually draw, compared to trained artists. The spontaneity of conceptual abstraction which according to Kerschensteiner was the young child's natural way of picture-making was to be maintained on the level of technical accomplishment, whereas Kerschensteiner believed that it was bound to be replaced by an increasing connection between drawing and seeing which was equally natural and spontaneous. After having gone through his own art education as a child and youth, Klee could never regard direct translation of seeing into drawing as spontaneous. He must have sensed that the "development" which Kerschensteiner declared to be a natural one, was in fact an indoctrination by discredited artistic ideals. His own reversal of the theory implies a rejection, unconscious or deliberate, of the fundamental ethical convictions on which Kerschensteiner had founded his art pedagogy. These were cautiously but firmly stated in the closing paragraphs of the book, where the author called for:

> an artistic education which begins to tackle a matter seriously, carefully, and thoroughly, that kind of artistic education which does not play with expression, which does not set up beautiful forms where there is nothing to say, for which the *honesty* of every productive work stands higher than the semblance of beauty.[77]

Thus, Kerschensteiner's art pedagogy finally revealed itself as a propaedeutic course in German working ethics. The call for a form which honestly represents the product rather than superficially decorating it, resembles the industrial aesthetics of the Werkbund founded in Munich two years later.[78] The rejection of "play" excluded not only the basic free activity of children, but also the key term of German idealist aesthetics since Kant and Schiller. Klee's opposition to a notion of children's art derived from such premises amounted to a quiet subversion of the thoroughly affirmative ideology of socialization of which that notion was a part.

Two years later, Klee had conceived his own, alternative notion of a growth toward artistic accomplishment in which the spontaneity of childhood was retained.

> To invent the chorus mysticus which would have to be performed by a few hundred children's voices. He who were able to do that would not need to exert himself. The many little works ultimately lead there.[79]

This diary entry from the summer of 1914 appears as an early version of Klee's emphatic postulate of the total painting encompassing all possible formal operations, stated at the close of his Jena lecture in January 1924.[80] It is an attempt to solve the contradiction between full-range formal complexity as a goal of the accomplished artist and single-minded, elementary expressiveness attained by the art of children. To that end, Klee projects a well-ordered survey of such single-minded, relatively simple formal statements in order to achieve potentially complete variation without the culturally predetermined complexity of academic art. Each individual work can only be a partial contribution to such a goal. The limited number of "a few hundred" appears more confident than the grave consciousness of the endless number of "operations" in the lecture ten years later. The term "chorus mysticus" evokes the ideal of a harmonious totality of an artist's personal range and style which will never outgrow the simplicity of childhood. It is an aptly confident metaphor, derived, significantly enough, from music, the realm of art where Klee had not challenged established culture. With this confidence in personal achievement unindebted to tradition, Klee, who had just returned from Tunis with a new self-assurance of being a painter,[81] set out to accomplish his career.

1918—1933

The Ambivalence of Childhood and Professionalism

By the last year of World War I, Klee had established himself as a successful painter. Through his rapidly increasing sales, he had become financially secure.[82] In the same year, he wrote a first literary summary of what he intended to be understood as the fundamentals of his art.[83] In 1919, he revised and published this text under the title "Creative Confession."[84] Here, Klee recommended abstract art to his prospective viewers as a "summer resort" which "through distraction offers invigoration for the unavoidable return to the greyness of the working day."[85] Thus, the pathetic definition of abstract art as a solitary flight above and away from the ruins of reality which Klee had conceived in 1915[86] was extended as an invitation to the public. Toward the end of the text, Klee characterized his art through this metaphor:

> Art plays an unwitting game with the last things and yet attains them.[87]

"Last things" refers to death and resurrection, "unwitting game," ambiguously, to childhood and Idealist aesthetics. The latter ~~ambi~~guity, however, may not have been noticeable in Klee's deliberately mystifying sentence. He had, in fact, emended it from the earlier, unpublished version, in which the reference to childhood was still explicit:

> *[*Art*]* plays an unwitting game with things. As a child imitates us in his play, we imitate in *[*our*]* play the forces which created the world and are *[*still*]* creating it.[88]

Klee's expedient change of the metaphysical perspective from creation to eschatology is in line with the stress on resurrection and Apocalypse in German art and literature immediately after the end of the war. That he should also have suppressed the reference to childhood in his published text shows how well aware he was by now of a critical ambivalence in the child-like qualities of his art which had become a crucial ingredient in his public success.

In the critical literature which accompanied and stimulated this success, the issue of childhood was raised with the same ambivalence. Klee's admirers extolled child-like immediacy of perception, imagination, and fantasy as his unique artistic vir-

Fig. 9. Paul Klee, The Expectant Ones, 1912.

tue, but by the same token defensively maintained that his work was completely deliberate and reflective, not naive. ". . .nothing has remained a child-like attempt! On the contrary, . . .all that Klee gives, has to be called fully accomplished, virile art," wrote Theodor Däubler as early as 1918, so that he could then safely characterize Klee as a "painter who perceives like a child in his adult age."[89] And in one of the first semi-advertising monographs to be published about the artist on the initiative of his dealer in 1920, Leopold Zahn reaffirmed: "Child-like fantasy and profound wisdom are here not opposites, but complements."[90] Throughout Klee's career in the Weimar Republic, his apologists were careful to strike this balance.[91] In a way, they were stating the obvious: that the child-like simplicity of Klee's figurations was the result of an intentional reduction, and that it did not impair his sophistication of form. But they did not clearly see that the elementary purity of form for which Klee was striving could not be understood without accepting first the principle of reduction of which the simplistic imagery was the sign. That is why critics who were not ready to respond to the aesthetic qualities of Klee's abstraction continued to raise the charge of childishness.[92]

Soon, however, seemingly benevolent critics not adverse to modern art as such, found the balance between child-like spontaneity and formal refinement claimed by Klee and his sympathizers to be suspect and contradictory. E.H., the reviewer of the big Klee exhibition at the Goltz gallery in Munich in 1920, admitted that ". . .one took pleasure with this seemingly child-like and naive mind," but also became weary of ". . .the machinery. . .with which the richness of genuine children's fantasy has been replaced."[93] In the same year, another critic, Willi Wolfradt, stated what he called "The Paul Klee case" in the most trenchant terms, as a contradiction between the yearning for transcultural immediacy in postwar art and the establishment of modernism in a traditional art world complete with museums, professorships, and great masters. Wolfradt was ready to grant that Klee's art was a legitimate and necessary "comedown of hypercomplication in child-like primitivism," but he forced the conclusion that for just this reason Klee "was more noteworthy as an anti-artist than as an artist."[94] Thus, Klee's anti-cultural tendency of the years before the war was now being turned against him as he was himself becoming part of an accepted culture.

Klee was well aware of the potential contradiction between the values of child-like ingenuity and artistic self-reflection in the public response to his work after the war. Already in 1909 he had noted in his diary:

> If with my things there arises at times a primitive impression, this *[seeming]* primitiveness is explained through my disciplined reduction to a few *[formal]* steps. It is only economy, and thus the ultimate professional experience. Therefore the opposite of real primitiveness.[95]

In 1922, he transcribed this entry verbatim into a final, summarizing lecture about the unification of formal diversity in his Bauhaus course.[96] When Klee started to teach at the Bauhaus, he joined a program of artistic instruction which derived in part from prewar traditions of art pedagogy for children.[97] This convergence was the end result of the increased serious attention given to the artistic activity of children since the turn of the century. Already in 1901 the *Kunsterziehungsbewegung* had justified children's spontaneous drawing and painting as a relevant artistic activity, even if only as a preliminary stage toward the more accomplished art of adults. In 1908, Kerschensteiner himself, in a programmatic speech at the Werkbund congress, had called for an art pedagogy which let children develop on their own terms, and had extended this postulate to schools of arts and crafts. In the years immediately before and during the war, Cizek and Itten taught art to children as a spontaneous formal and expressive activity, and it was Cizek who eventually transferred some of these principles to adult art instruction. After the end of the war, Cizek and Itten infused their teaching with a new belief in the transcendental, regenerative mission of abstract art. When Itten devised his preliminary course at the Bauhaus, he was thus ultimately dependent on a tradition of art education for children. Franciscono has stressed that the foundation of Itten's *Vorkurs* "did not come primarily from orthodox sources of professional art education but rather from the liberal Rousseau-Pestalozzi-Froebel-Montessori reform tradition of child education, which had as a basic tenet that education is essentially the bringing out and developing of inherent gifts through a guided process of free and even playful activity and self-learning. This tenet. . .is, above all, behind Itten's famous intention to 'liberate the student's creative powers' and to retrain him from the beginning by means which initially included by-passing the intellect in order to reach what is conceived to be his natural unlearned creative center."[98]

Klee's by now established reputation for including spontaneous, child-like simplicity in his notion of modern art must have appeared to fit well into this pedagogical concept and may have been one of the reasons why he was appointed to the Bauhaus faculty.[99] In the spring of 1922, his colleague Lothar

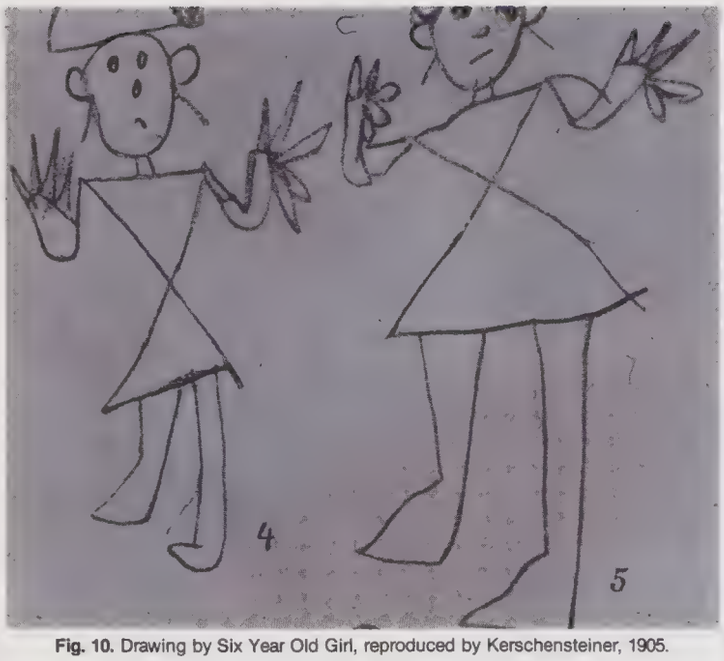


Fig. 10. Drawing by Six Year Old Girl, reproduced by Kerschensteiner, 1905.

Schreyer, a proponent of the same concept of mystical creativity which Itten represented, apparently had a long conversation with him on the issue, which he purported to publish verbatim thirty-four years later in his memoirs.[100] In this account, Schreyer himself subscribes so emphatically to the affinity of modern art with the triad of children, the insane, and primitives, that considerable doubts remain as to whether he adequately represents the differentiations in Klee's own position as they appear in the testimonies from the time before the war.[101] According to him, Klee would once again have taken up the charge of childish scribbling from hostile critics and turned it into a positive value.[102] Strictly in line with the prewar position of the *Blaue Reiter* group, and of Kandinsky in particular, he would have spoken of a spiritual reality beyond sensual perception of which children, along with the mentally ill and primitive people, partake, and which the modern artist is to make visible as well. He called it *Zwischenwelt,* "world in between."[103] Time and again, so Schreyer writes, Klee warned that this spiritual reality should never be faked by fantasy, a term which he appears to use here in the negative sense of deliberate contrivance.[104] If there is any truth at all in Schreyer's overstated account, such a warning may have been intended as a conscientious answer to the charge of 'mechanically' pretending childhood 'style' which some of Klee's critics had raised against him. In any event, the supposed straightforward continuity of Klee's prewar position appears at variance with the sentence about "the ultimate professional experience" which he reactivated in the same year for his teaching. Schreyer deliberately ignored that Klee was shifting away from Itten's pedagogical concept, along with Gropius and the majority of the Bauhaus masters. Nevertheless, the ambivalence of childhood and professionalism remained permanently inherent in Klee's work.

Klee's Speech at Jena in 1924

Two years later, both Schreyer and Itten had left the Bauhaus where Gropius was now aiming at a professional, constructive, and economically viable conception of art in the service of society. By the beginning of 1924, however, this conception was already contested by the political Right in the city of Weimar.[105] "The cultural importance of the Bauhaus is that there all true constructive culture is perpetually destroyed," wrote the leading conservative opponent, Dr. Nonn, since according to him the work of the Bauhaus artists was as "pathological" as the art of the insane, bearing "every sign of the deepest spiritual abandon and disintegration."[106] For proof, he compared it to the reproductions in Prinzhorn's book *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken* which had appeared in 1922. This was the book which, in Schreyer's recollection, Klee had used in the same sense, but affirmatively, to emphatically stress the affinity of his own art to that of the insane, primitive, and children.[107] Now, the situation had changed, and Klee became defensive about Bauhaus art as an endeavor toward a constructive, rational visual culture. In a programmatic speech delivered at the opening of an exhibition of his works at the Jena Kunstverein on January 25, 1924, he felt compelled to publicly reject what he called "the tale of the infantilism of my drawing."

What comes across in this speech is a perhaps somewhat uncertain hope, on the part of Klee, that abstract painting could be patiently explained as rational and logical to everyone, and therefore justified to the public. It is an effort to extend Klee's art instruction from practicing artists to the viewers, or buyers, of pictures, to impose the rules of making pictures as the rules of their consumption also. Thus, the speech came to be a summary of Klee's intention to derive a systematic art instruction from the radical reduction of painting to its component elements of form. He called it "the cultivation of this pictorial medium, its pure upraising and its pure application." It is in this context that he took up his long-standing concern with childhood drawing.

> The tale of the infantilism of my drawing must have originated with those linear figurations where I tried to combine the notion of an object, let's say a man, with a pure representation of the element of line.[108]

The resemblance of purely linear figurations representing "the notion" of a human being to mannikins drawn by children evokes the concept of the "schematic stage" of drawing as Kerschensteiner had defined it back in 1905.[109] In 1912, Klee had intentionally reverted to this concept for the sake of its expressive potential; now, he claimed to do so because it would ensure formal purity and compositional control.

> If I wanted to represent the man such 'as he is', then I would need for this configuration such a confusing maze of lines that one could not speak of a pure, elementary representation, but an obfuscation past recognition would ensue.[110]

The proposition that outline drawing is the first natural stage of picture making links the build-up of painting with Kerschensteiner's natural development of the drawing talent. It was no doubt reenforced by Klee's own self-development as a professional artist, which had started with drawing at the beginning of the century and culminated in his self-proclaimed dominance of color at Tunis in the spring of 1914. The concomitant reversal of Kerschensteiner's conventional ideal of art now explicitly embraces the entire process of artistic growth which, instead of transcending from schematic abstraction to visual reality, expands abstraction itself to the utmost complication, entirely on its own terms. As he was defining and exploring this ambitious program, Klee could not have himself pinned down to pure linear image-making as the essence of his art. Line drawing was to be no more than the first step of a potentially universal progression toward complexity in which it remained clearly distinguishable along with all steps that followed. This new complexity would vindicate "economic" form-reduction as "the ultimate professional experience" which Klee had insisted should not be taken for primitiveness in his Bauhaus course notes two years earlier.

Klee had taken the fusion of art pedagogy and professional art instruction out of Itten's pseudo-mystical immediacy and made it into a science of painting where elemental purity, spontaneity of expression, and extreme technical refinement were to coincide. In his Bauhaus course, he told his students:

> Let us for the moment stay with the most primitive pictorial medium, the line. In the early times of the human race, when writing and drawing still coincide, it is the given element. Our children also most frequently start with it; one day they discover the phenomenon of the point subject to movement, with an enthusiasm that one can hardly imagine any more. *[. . .]* The chaotic ways of the first play recede before an incipient regularity. The freedom of lineation is subjected to the final effect to be expected, and as a precaution there begins an operation with very few lines. One remains primitive.
>
> And yet one cannot very well persevere in primitivism. One will have to discover a modus to enrich the meager end result without destroying or blurring the clear and simple design.[111]

Fig. 11. Snowball Match, Drawing by Six Year Old Girl, reproduced by Kerschensteiner, 1905.

Fig. 12. Paul Klee, Children as Actors, 1913.

The designation of line as "primitive" is purposely ambiguous, as if artistic training reenacted an anthropological growth of culture. At the same time, it reenacts the child's initiation into picture-making, of which line drawing is but the first step. "As this 'infantile' example shows you, I occupy myself with partial operations: I am, among other things, a draughtsman," Klee went on to say to his audience at Jena.[112] And there is a lot to follow: after the 'pure' line drawing, the 'pure' balancing of dark and light, the 'pure' exploration of the range of color tonality, and after that, "all possible synthesis" of any two or more of such operations. All steps remain in evidence so as not to obscure the discrete totality of visual composition which is the measure of a complex painting, or oeuvre of an artist. In this projection, the actual achievement of "the work of a completely wide range" is bound to remain "a dream."

> Nothing can be precipitated. . . .if once it is time for it, for that kind of work, so much the better! *[. . .]* We found parts for it, but not yet the whole.[113]

To isolate schematic line-drawing as an end in itself would make it persist as "infantilism," that is, the premature halting of an organic evolution. On the other hand, it is to be retained, as a visible stage of growth, in analogy to the natural development of a human being, each stage of which is to be respected rather than suppressed. This theory of art in analogy to art pedagogy can be understood as an implicit, or probably even conscious, alternative to Kerschensteiner's theory of the natural artistic talent, according to which a judicious high school curriculum of six to eight years would eliminate any trace of self-sufficient form and release "the drawing talent" as an inborn capability or even urge to come to terms with visual reality through its mimetic reproduction. In contrast to Kerschensteiner's precocious teenage realists, Klee's most conscientious artist never reaches final accomplishment, but remains forever on the move in a self-exploring, autodidactic process which has become the equivalent of art itself.

> Man is not complete. One has to keep in development, be open, also in life, be a child on another level, child of creation, of the creator.[114]

In this conception of artistic development as permanent childhood "on another level," the prewar insistence on child-like immediacy of form uncontaminated by misguided adult realism is transfigured into a coherent theory of the intrinsic rationality of art. It links up with Klee's romantically 'cosmic' doctrine of art as eternal 'genesis' which cannot be halted in any finished product. But its confident academic application in the state-supported and industry-oriented institution of the Bauhaus almost certainly misled Klee as to the extent to which the original radical, anti-cultural thrust of the notion of elementary art could be accepted by the public. The harsh word "infantilism" against which he felt compelled to defend himself reveals the unresolved cultural conflict which at the same moment was already being forced by the increasing petty-bourgeois, nationalist political opposition against the Bauhaus at Weimar. One may assume that the audience whom Klee addressed at the Jena Kunstverein was, on the whole, as favorably disposed toward Klee's work as the increasing bourgeois clientele to whom he sold his pictures. But one can discern a pre-political awareness of this class-limitation of his claim to contribute to a new visual culture in the closing remarks of the speech. Klee's ambiguous lament *"Uns trägt kein Volk"*[115] is a literary stylization of the statement "The people don't support us" into meaning "We are no part of any national culture." This amounted to the admission of a charge that continued to be made in increasingly intense political attacks in the subsequent years of the Weimar Republic, coming from both Right and Left. Insofar as these attacks were directed at the art of Klee, they singled out the issue of childhood as the most convenient one with which to dispute his claim to cultural seriousness.

Child-like Art as a Political Issue in 1930

Early in 1930, Alois Schardt, one of the most engaged supporters of modern art among German museum directors, published a lengthy article entitled "The Transcendental in Paul Klee" in *Museum der Gegenwart,* a newly founded periodical in which modern, forward-looking museum policies were advocated against an already increasing conservative opposition. He based his argument on the by now familiar association of modern art with the triad of children, primitives, and the insane, simultaneously reaffirming the fundamental distinction between these groups and the modern artist which alone could validate the comparison. What both had in common, so Schardt argued, was the ability to reach a "transcendental," or, literally,

"supra-sensual" reality. But the modern artist, unlike the others, kept his consciousness in control of the expanded field of extra-logical fantasies and parapsychical sensations.[116]

At about the same time, Paul Westheim's *Kunstblatt,* which had worked toward the acceptance of modern art by the collecting public since the beginning of the Weimar Republic, came out with a more dubious acclaim of the child-like qualities in Klee's pictures, dubious because it completely disregarded the distinction which conditioned the appreciation of those qualities by the art public. The article, entitled "Children on Paul Klee," was a report by Hans-Friedrich Geist, an obscure art teacher in the Thuringian town of Meuselwitz, about the reactions of his pupils to some of Klee's pictures of which Geist had shown them reproductions.[117] The children's gratuitous and inarticulate answers which Geist recorded at great length appear by themselves meaningless today, and they must have made a similar impression on any discriminating reader at the time when they were published. But they were meant to carry only one simple yet fundamental message: that small-town, low-class school children were fascinated with Klee's pictures. This seemed to demonstrate the most radical breakthrough to popular acceptance a modern artist could achieve. Not only did enlightened adults appreciate the artistic spontaneity of children, but now children reciprocated with a spontaneous appreciation of modern art, thereby validating the claim of that art to an immediacy transcending the confines of high culture. For Geist, the experience proved the direct, unqualified affinity between both.

> Whoever has discovered the infinite enchanted garden, the mysterious world of Paul Klee. . .knows of the kinship that exists between Klee's works and the creative work of children. *[. . .]* The creative forces in the artists, in Klee, in the children, they are the sun which animates, illumines and warms the world. *[. . .]*
>
> I know the world of the child because. . .I have succeeded in going beyond the bankruptcy of the intellect and returning home to the child. *[. . .]* Society, an organization of utilitarian functionaries, ruled by hangmen.[118]

This sentimental evocation of nature, which culminates in biological metaphors of world salvation, clearly emerges from an anti-intellectual resentment against contemporary society and politics. As early as 1890 the influential conservative writer Julius Langbehn, in his *Rembrandt as an Educator,* had championed the pure, instinctual naturalness of children against city culture.[119] Such an irrationalist affect against technological civilization became more and more widespread in German conservative circles toward the end of the Twenties. It was one of the motivations for the political opposition against the Bauhaus conception of a visual culture compatible with modern technology, which directly or indirectly had become an aesthetic ideology of the Weimar Republic.[120] That Geist's article should have appeared at this time in the leading magazine for the bourgeois art public, ostensibly as yet another proof of the viability of modern art, points to conservative political tendencies of parts of the bourgeoisie which became increasingly disloyal to the republican governments. Geist had, in fact, referred the anti-cultural notion of childhood, which had no overt political meaning in modern art before the war, to the tradition of German conservative ideology. It is in this sense that he acclaimed what he took for the presence of timeless nature in the pictures of children as well as of Klee as a value to be held against the supposedly over-intellectualized but inefficient technological civilization of the Weimar Republic, which in 1930, at the beginning of the world economic crisis, was headed for political collapse.

Geist's article in the *Kunstblatt* was immediately recognized for the political ideology which it implied in a rejoinder by Rudolf Arnheim which appeared a few weeks later in *Die Weltbühne,* the most influential German journal of the non-partisan left intelligentsia.[121] Arnheim eagerly accepted the affinity between the art of Klee and the sensibility of children which Geist had wanted to demonstrate in order to turn it into an indictment of the cultural pretense of modern art:

> While the Isms of the season, about which so much mendacious noise has been made, have rapidly sunk to becoming the fresco style for provincial coffee shops. . . , Paul Klee still ranks high in esteem and price. He owes that to the chance fact that his pictures and drawings are full of child-like figures and thus satisfy the demands of a bourgeoisie which recovers from the terrors of this great moment with their sofa dolls and assorted grotesque nicknacks, in flirtatious contempt for everything spiritual and problematic. One buys for many hundreds of marks a little sheet of paper on which a clumsy hand has painted a few twigs or manikins, and which could almost have been made by the teenage daughter of the house. *[. . .]* The painter Klee has with his hands' work succeeded in attaining a stage which others go through in the fifth grade, when they are bored with class and doodle on their blotting paper. . . *[. . .]* It is embarrassing to see how someone, while his contemporaries receive lessons in world history, sits in a corner and doodles on his blotting papers.[122]

In the debate between Geist and Arnheim, the fronts were clearly drawn: Geist embraced, and Arnheim rejected, Klee's art for what they both perceived as its unqualified analogy with children's drawings. Both ignored the efforts of Klee himself and his admirers to subordinate that analogy to artistic reason and aesthetic refinement. As soon as this distinction was not being honored, the issue of childhood regained its original controversial sense. Arnheim radicalized, and politicized, Willi Wolfradt's criticism of 1920[123] into an all-out attack on Klee as a pseudo-artist, setting him up as a representative of the modern tradition at large. Such a critique of modern art as a bourgeois withdrawal into culture lacking social awareness, and therefore historical relevance, had been voiced by leftist artists and intellectuals since the beginning of the Weimar Republic. Ironically, Arnheim now placed Klee's art side by side with the "nippes and sofa dolls" of the very same culture which Klee himself had intended to challenge with the idea of child-like art in the years before the war.

Soon Klee had the opportunity to clarify his position vis-à-vis Geist. In the spring of 1930, Geist came to Dessau in order to organize an exhibition of children's art at the municipal art gallery. He had been acquainted with Klee since 1922, and had presented him on one of his birthdays with a portfolio of children's drawings. Now Klee was helping him with the selection for his exhibition. On this occasion the two men had a far-reaching conversation about the relationship of children and art of which Geist apparently kept a record, for he published an account of it as late as 1950.[124] Geist's literal quotations of what Klee was saying to him must be read with caution for several reasons.[125] Nevertheless, they ring true, because they square with the position on the art of children which Klee had taken in the Jena speech of 1924, and because they contradict Geist's own position as he stated it to Klee in the form of cautious but persistent questions.

As he talked to Geist, Klee methodically elaborated the fundamental distinction between his art and that of children on which the cultural appreciation of his work depended. "Don't relate my works to those of children. They are worlds apart," he admonished his interlocutor.[126] Then he proceeded to outline the difference with a new argument, couched in one of those conceptual polarities which he so often used for the articulation of his thought. It was the relationship between content and form. The child, Klee said, wants to make images of the reality in which he lives, as a way of coming to terms with that reality. He does not hesitate to make images no matter how limited his capabilities. Their formal characteristics are unvoluntary or even unconscious byproducts of the child's spontaneous drive at picture-making.[127] "Never forget: the child knows nothing of art."[128] The artist, on the contrary, is concerned with the conscious formal composition of his pictures, whose representational meaning comes about without intention, through associations of the unconscious.[129] Thus Klee allocates form and content to the child and the artist in a reciprocal contrast, and this conceptual polarity extends into a statement about the dependence or independence of image-making on the reality of life. It is the child, according to Klee, whose image-making is directly motivated by the desire and necessity to react to and dominate that reality, and therefore acquires the immediate relevance of a tool, a weapon, an elementary biological function.[130] The artist, on the other hand, "has the visible behind

himself" and claims a state of self-controlled, self-conscious calm, where he is no longer affected by reality, but transforms it, through his memory, into introspective form-constructions.[131] This is the position of deliberate withdrawal which Klee had formulated so decidedly in the second year of the war.[132] Now, he contrasts it with the children's struggle for life through picture-making, and styles his own professional self-awareness as an equivalent of maturity in life. It is a turnabout of the position which Klee had shared with Kandinsky and the *Blaue Reiter* group in 1912. Then, children's singularly immediate experience of the "inner sound" of reality was to be emulated by grown-up artists. Now, "inner reality"[133] can only be reached through "the ultimate professional experience,"[134] for which childhood is at best a stage to be remembered so as to remain conscious of the difficulty of making pictures.[135]

Klee had come as close as he could to an unconscious ideological postulate about the social security of the modern artist no longer worried by the struggle for subsistence. For him, this presupposed the financial security of his sales and the more precarious political security of his teaching position at the Bauhaus. Hence the unreflected confidence of his subsequent remarks about an art pedagogy for children, which he wanted to make responsive to technical progress and intellectual emancipation.

> The child wants to move on, wants to get ahead, does not want to stick to early stages. [. . .] How many things does a sixteen year old boy know of the tree, of the ship, of the airplane. He is not capable of translating so much knowledge into forms. Is he therefore, if artistic creativity attracts him, to renounce picture-making, to limit himself to motifs found in nature. . .[?][136]

Kerschensteiner would have answered "yes," since for his notion of an imagery true to seeing, anything more than that would have entailed an insincere or premature overextension of a child's talent. Klee's diametrical opposition to this kind of art pedagogy may well have been conscious, for it starts out on a definition almost identical to that of Kerschensteiner: "The child draws as he thinks. His products are realizations of a thinking process."[137] But instead of the guided natural development from the conceptual to the visual, which Kerschensteiner had recommended, Klee called for an uninhibited expansion of children's conceptual imagery by which they might visualize the most complex products of technology — "the ship, the airplane." Picture-making as a curious, eager mental activity, unrestricted by the limits of seeing, appeared to Klee to fit what he called "the eminently intellectualized development of our century" and optimistically hailed as an opportunity for the emancipation of creativity in man.[138]

However, in spite of these clear-cut distinctions, Klee did reach back, in his conversation with Geist, for the remote point where the child's and the artist's form activity may appear analogous. It was a point in time even before the growing child develops the urge to cope with reality by representing it. "Only the infant, in the first stage, interprets, investigates, discovers possibilities. He plays."[139] Klee did not say that the infant therefore mirrors the modern artist, but the terms he used to characterize early childhood drawing would be equally applicable to the "operations" of the artist bent on the development of form. Klee's preoccupation of long standing, the synthesis between primordial ingenuity and professional self-awareness, appears in this sentence as a remote coincidence of opposites, of scribbling and composition. Significantly enough, the sentence culminates in the term "play" which Kerschensteiner had excluded from his conception of art pedagogy and which Klee had embraced in his conception of art.[140] But this ultimate analogy between the artist and the child is clearly an ideal extrapolation. As soon as Klee defined art as an interaction with reality, he construed it as an opposite to childhood.

Klee and the National Socialist Position on Children's Art

In 1934, four years after the conversation took place, and one year after Klee's condemnation and dismissal by the National Socialist authorities, Hans Friedrich Geist published a substantial book with the unmistakable title *The Rebirth of the Artistic out of the People. A Book of the Art of the People and its Confirmation in the Creativity of the Child, as an Example of Practical Work at Nationhood.*[141] Klee is not mentioned in this book, as if Geist on his part had drawn the consequences of the disengagement which Klee had clarified to him in 1930. Now Geist openly deplored the culture of the Weimar Republic[142] and hailed Hitler as the leader of a restored German nation.[143] The artistic activity and education of children was to form a vital contribution to the new national sentiment. Geist professed to aim his book at just this goal.[144] He started from the assumption that children's artistic creativity, if it remained uncorrupted by "civilization," could be developed into genuine folk art.[145] For, Geist affirmed, both children's and folk art were not the result of individual achievement, but stemmed directly from a natural, that is, biological community.[146] Geist phrased these beliefs in orthodox National Socialist terminology: *Blut und Boden, erbbiologisch, Lebensraum.*[147] He gave a new political significance to the by now commonplace warning of art pedagogy not to impose on children uncongenial drawing standards of visual correctness: this would lead to a degradation of children's talents, defined as a biological, national heritage, by intellectualized 'civilization', to which the National Socialists opposed a ficticious ideal of rural life.[148]

This art pedagogy in the service of National Socialist ideology, seemingly based on the uninhibited creativity of the child, derives from the familiar principles of reevaluation of children's art which had been developed in Germany before the war and had become all but commonplace thereafter. Geist and Klee would presumably have agreed upon them a few years earlier, except that Klee by then did not accept them any more as principles of modern art. Here is the definition of children's picture-making as conceptual invention rather than visual depiction, which reaches the very essence of things[149]; the warning against an art education fixed on realism and rationality which will spoil or stifle children's natural talents[150]; and also the affirmation that children do not produce nor do they want to produce art in any cultural sense.[151] The quest for natural creativity, and the concomitant aversion against advanced technical civilization, which the *Blaue Reiter* artists had championed before the war with hardly any political awareness, now proved to lend itself just as easily to the political ideology of nature versus civilization which the National Socialist regime advanced against the culture of the Weimar Republic. The only new elements in Geist's politicized position were, first, the assumption that both children's and folk art were ready and even eager to receive as their content symmetrical motifs and ritual symbols of a positive creed handed down by authority,[152] and second, the call for hard work and stern discipline in the art educator's task of leading the innate national potential of children's artistic activity toward its prescribed goals.[153]

Some of the potentially antidemocratic ingredients in Geist's position on childhood and art education could already be gauged in his article "Children on Klee" of 1930, and the deliberate distance in which Klee kept him in their conversation of the same year can be understood as a more or less clearly reflected sense on Klee's part that he was facing an incipient antagonist of the visual culture of the Weimar Republic for which he himself stood. Indeed, the proto-National Socialist trend of much of German art education during the later part of the Weimar Republic is notorious.[154] It is dependent on the irrationalist, conservative trend with which the reevaluation of art pedagogy had started out at the turn of the century. Already Langbehn, in his *Rembrandt as an Educator,* had gone as far as to maintain that "genuine and pure" Germans preserved more child-like spontaneity than other nations.[155] Long before 1933, seemingly progressive art educators had insisted on a natural affinity of children's artistic creativity to forms of peasant arts and crafts.[156] They had held out the "natural" art of children as an antidote against contemporary "machine civilization"[157] as well as against the "Isms" of modern art that went with it.[158] When Geist published his professedly National Socialist book in 1934, he expressly acknowledged that he was indebted to the teachings of Gustav Britsch,[159] one of the most influential art educators of the Weimar Republic. The conservative and irrational elements in Britsch's theory, as it had been codified by his disciple Ernst Kornmann,[160] lent themselves to immediate adaptation by National Socialist art educators.[161] Blatant examples of racism and political reaction can be found

throughout German art education of the Twenties, no matter how unpolitical its appearance.[162] By contrast, efforts to bring modern art to bear on art education were limited in scope.[163] Geist's attempts to link his own conception of art pedagogy to the art of Klee were not typical, and his later turnabout would almost seem a return to the mainstream of the profession.

Even in Geist's belated account of 1950, there transpires a continuous, gentle but firm resistance on Klee's part against Geist's respectful efforts to pin him down to an equation with the art of children. No doubt he would have embraced the equation much more readily in the Munich years before the war. But in 1930 Klee must have been aware of the very different cultural situation in which the issue of art and childhood was now placed. It appears as no coincidence that he drew the line most firmly against a National Socialist future, although Geist did not as yet show any manifest hint of a political commitment. Klee's position in the Weimar Republic entailed a positive approach toward the relationship between art, society, and the state. He was thus bound to abandon the issue of childhood as an argument of cultural critique. Such a critique, and the affirmation of childhood that went with it, had by now passed into new, conservative hands. The change of fronts can already be sensed in the closing paragraph of Klee's Jena lecture, in which he had rejected the charge of "infantilism." The regretful admission that the art which he and his colleagues at the Bauhaus were in the process of developing was not supported by the *Volk*[164] is the exact reverse of the equation between folk art and children's art in the evolving nationaist, antidemocratic ideology of art pedagogy, where the term *Volk* lay ready to be carried into the National Socialist party program, just as Klee's scepticism of 1924 is the exact reverse of Geist's confidence, in 1934, that a national art would regenerate itself out of the German nation's biological potential, analogous to the naturally growing creativity of children.

Eventually, of course, the careful staking out of cultural positions by Klee, Geist, or anybody else became pointless in the face of the political takeover by the National Socialists who decided cultural issues by administrative action. They could ignore the reasoned distance between childhood and artistic reflection which Klee and his defenders maintained, and fall back as simple-mindedly as any critic from the time before the war on the charge of infantilism as the surest indicator of artistic incompetence according to their own criteria. When the National Socialist critic Robert Scholz, writing in the *Deutsche Kultur-Wacht* of 1933, denounced "the mad, infantile smearings of a Klee,"[165] he reiterated two of the three anti-cultural ideals of the modern tradition, but conveniently omitted the third, primitivism, too close to the National Socialist' own ideal of pre-civilized folk art. This time, however, to rephrase Hans Bloesch's argument of 1912,[166] the reproach was raised by people who no longer had to expect a reply.

This is a chapter from a book-length essay on Paul Klee, in progress. My thanks go to Barbara and Rifaat Abou-El-Haj, Marcel Franciscono, to my students, Liz Baldewicz, Carol Guilbaut, Hélène Setlak, and Jane Williams, as well as to my wife, Maria Eugenia Lacarra, for their critical reading of the text, which has led me to many important corrections.

1. Most recently: T. Osterwold, *Paul Klee: Die Ordnung der Dinge,* Stuttgart, 1975, pp. 8, 11ff., 58, 70, 106.
2. C. Baudelaire, "Le peintre de la vie moderne," in *Oeuvres complètes,* Paris, 1954, pp. 881-920, cf. p. 888: "Mais le génie n'est que *l'enfance retrouvée* à volonté . . ."; cf. R. Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Painting,* revised edition, New York, 1967, p. 213.
3. See below, note 11.
4. See below, note 126.
5. The issue of childhood is commented upon throughout the art-historical literature on Klee, but has been explicitly discussed only by Goldwater, *Primitivism* (see note 2), pp. 192ff., and J. S. Pierce, *Paul Klee and Primitive Art,* Harvard Dissertation 1961, published New York and London, 1976, pp. 72ff. Their arguments will be taken up in context.
6. I do not, however, intend to survey possible child-like features in Klee's work itself. An attempt in this direction has been made by Pierce, *Paul Klee,* pp. 85ff., on the basis of his conviction that basic features of children's drawing can be anthropologically defined: see below, note 76.
7. *Die Alpen,* 6 (1912), p. 302, reprinted in P. Klee, *Schriften. Rezensionen und Aufsätze,* ed. C. Geelhaar, Cologne, 1976, pp. 97f.: "Es gibt nämlich auch noch Uranfänge von Kunst, wie man sie eher im ethnographischen Museum findet oder daheim in der Kinderstube (lache nicht, Leser), die Kinder können's auch, *und das ist durchaus nicht vernichtend für die jüngsten Bestrebungen, sondern* es steckt *positive* Weisheit *in diesem Umstand.* Je hilfloser diese Kinder sind, desto lehrreichere *Kunst* bieten sie; *denn es gibt auch schon hier eine Korruption: wenn die Kinder anfangen entwickelte Kunstwerke in sich aufzunehmen oder gar ihnen nachzuahmen.* Parallele Erscheinungen sind die Zeichnungen Geisteskranker, und es ist also auch Verrücktheit kein treffendes Schimpfwort. Alles das ist in Wahrheit viel ernster zu nehmen, als sämtliche Kunstmuseen, *wenn* es gilt, die heutige Kunst zu reformieren." Words set in italics (except *"wenn"* in the last sentence) are variants from Klee's transcription of the passage in his diary, see below, note 9.
8. The term "jüngsten" is ambiguous in German usage, meaning both "youngest" and "most recent." Klee obviously used it deliberately.
9. When Klee transcribed the review for his own use into his diary, he left out or toned down the argumentative parts of the published version (set in italics in note 7): "Es gibt nämlich noch Uranfänge von Kunst, wie man sie eher in ethnographischen Sammlungen findet oder dahiem in seiner Kinderstube. Lache nicht, Leser! Die Kinder können es auch und es steht Weisheit darin, dass sie es auch können! Je hilfloser sie sind, desto lehrreichere Beispiele sie uns, und man muss auch sie schon früh vor einer Korruption bewahren. Parallele Erscheinungen sind die Arbeiten der Geisteskranken, und es ist also weder kindisches Gebaren noch Verrücktheit hier ein Schimpfwort, das zu treffen vermöchte, wie es gemeint ist." (F. Klee, ed., *Tagebücher von Paul Klee 1898-1918,* Köln 1957, p. 276, no. 905)
10. Cf. Goldwater, *Primitivism* (see note 2), p. XIX: "The most contemptuous criticism of recent painting comes from those who say: 'Any child of eight could have done that.' It is also the most difficult of all judgments to answer, since it involves the recognition, but not the admiration, of an apparent spontaneity of inspiration and technique whose excellence we have come to take for granted. But our standard is a recent one, and when its value is questioned we see that it cannot be explained from within the individual canvas." Goldwater has not recognized that this ambivalence is a historical issue, fundamental for an assessment of the impact of children's picture-making on modern art. Can it be assumed that the analogy first came from the public and the critics, intended as a reproach, and was then accepted and turned into an affirmative value by modern artists and their apologists? This question could only be decided after a comprehensive chronological investigation of the text sources.
11. H. Bloesch, "Ein moderner Graphiker," *Die Alpen,* 6 (1912), pp. 264-272, reprinted by H. C. von Tavel, "Dokumente zum Phänomen 'Avantgarde'. Paul Klee und der moderne Bund in der Schweiz 1910-1912," in *Beiträge zur Kunst des 19. und. 20. Jahrhunderts* (= Schweizerisches Institut für Kunstwissenschaft, Jahrbuch 1968/69), Zurich, 1970, pp. 69-116, cf. pp. 97f.: " 'Das sind Zeichnungen eines Kindes, das noch nichts gelernt hat.' [. . .] 'So zeichnet . . . ein Kind, das noch nie das Bilderbuch gründlich angeschaut hat.' Hier, glaube ich, treffen wir den Kernpunkt der neuen Kunst, die sich in Klee einen Weg sucht. Er und die ähnlichen Zielen zustrebenden Maler . . . sehen in der noch unbeeinflussten Kunst des Kindes und primitiven Völker einen Wegweiser für ihr eigenes Schaffen. [. . .] Dass man . . . die Zeichnungen [Klees] als kindliche Kritzeleien bezeichnen darf, scheint uns ein Vorwurf, den nur der aufwerfen kann, der darauf keine Entgegnung erwartet."
12. At this point, Bloesch refers to the artists of the *Blaue Reiter* group and to Klee's own review of their exhibition in the same number of the magazine.
13. Goldwater, *Primitivism* (see note 2), pp. 128f.
14. W. Kandinsky, "Ueber die Formfrage," in *Der Blaue Reiter,* new edition, Munich, 1965, pp. 132-188, cf. pp. 168ff. Cf. also A. Macke, "Die Masken," *ibid.,* pp. 53-59, cf. pp. 55.
15. Kandinsky, *ibid.,* pp. 168f.: "So entblösst sich in jeder Kinderzeichnung ohne Ausnahme der innere Klang des Gegenstandes von selbst. [. . .] Es ist eine unbewusste, enorme Kraft im Kinde, . . . die das Kinderwerk dem Werke des Erwachsenen gleich hoch (und oft viel höher!) stellt."
16. F. Klee, in *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 6.
17. *Ibid.,* p. 266, no. 895, spring 1911: "Und num bin ich auch noch Bürokrat geworden, indem dass ich ein grosses genaues Verzeichnis meiner sämtlichen künstlerischen Produkte von Kindheit an aufgeschrieben habe. Nur die Schulzeichnungen, Akte usw. habe ich nicht darin aufgenommen, weil ihnen doch die produktive Selbständigkeit fehlt."
18. J. Glaesemer, *Paul Klee Handzeichnungen,* I, Berne, 1973, p. 7, with reproduction of the page.
19. *Ibid.,* p. 10.
20. For the connection, cf. *ibid,* p. 12.
21. Cf. A. C. Quintavalle, *Klee fino al Bauhaus,* Parma, 1972, p. XLV: "Di fatto egli viene componendo due sistemi paralleli, una specie di *corpus* organizzato della propria produzione figurativa ed una analisi minuziosa del proprio percorso mentale." Klee ceased writing a diary in 1918, but kept the oeuvre catalog going till his death.
22. According to the supplementary manuscript to the diaries, published in F. Klee, *Paul Klee,* Zurich, 1960, p. 8; cf. also *Tagebucher* (see note 9), pp. 15f., no. 5, and the memoir by Klee's sister Mathilde, published in L. Grote, ed., *Erinnerungen an Paul Klee,* Munich, 1959, p. 13, and in F. Klee, *Paul Klee,* pp. 34f. Mathilde Klee reports that her grandmother protected the young child from efforts to correct his left-handedness: "Nichts da, das Kind braught die Hand, die es nach seinem Gefühl besser brauchen kann." This characterizes the degree of free, spontaneous artistic activity which Klee must have remembered from this early time; throughout his life, he continued drawing with the left hand.
23. Supplementary manuscript (F. Klee, *Paul Klee,* pp. 8f): "Nach dem Tode meiner Grossmutter in meinem fünften Jahr, war ich als Bildner verwaist; dafür setzte bald meine musikalische Erziehung ein."
24. That Klee himself perceived this as an alternative appears evident from the text quoted above, note 24.
25. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 18, no. 17.
26. Kandinsky, "Ueber die Formfrage" (see note 14), p. 168: "Die Erwachsenen, besonders die Lehrer, bemühen sich, dem Kinde das Praktisch-Zweckmässige Aufzudrängen, und kritisieren dem Kinde seine Zeichnung gerade von diesem flachen Standpunkte aus: 'dein Mensch kann nicht gehen, weil er nur ein Bein hat', 'auf deinem Stuhl kann man nicht sitzen, da er schief ist' usw."
27. Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I (see note 18), p. 12.
28. *Ibid.,* p. 19ff.
29. Supplementary manuscript (F. Klee, *Paul Klee* [see note 22], p. 9: "Ich zeichnete nun allmählich regelmässig diese Landschaft, ohne einen tieferen Sinn auch nur andeutungsweise hineinzulegen. Ein gewisses Geschick in der Handhabung spitzer Bleistifte und Federn und ein gewisser Geschmack in der Auswahl der Motive brachten mir die Anerkennung der nächsten Umgebung."
30. See below, note 32.
31. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 266, no. 895, spring 1911: "Nur die Schulzeichnungen, Akte usw. habe ich nicht darin aufgenommen, weil ihnen doch die produktive Selbständigkeit fehlt."
32. In a note on the first page of the oeuvre catalog, Klee wrote that he excluded "alle nicht künstlerischen Zeichnungen (12. bis 19. Lebensjahr) und später die schulmässigen Zeichnungsstudien." (Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I [see note 18], p. 20).
33. "Meine Landschaften könnte ein Frauenzimmer gemacht haben." Letter to his father of November 5, 1898, quoted in Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I, p. 25.

34. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 33, no. 63, end (?) of 1898: "Nur das Verbotene freute mich. Zeichnungen und Schriftstellerei."
35. One of the earliest examples of this kind of acclaim seems to have been Theodor Däubler's essay "Paul Klee," *Neue Blätter für Kunst und Dichtung,* 1 (1918), p. 11, on which Klee comments sarcastically: "Der Aufsatz Däublers kurz, er versucht, auf meiner Musikalität aufzubauen, und verbreitet ausserdem meinen internationalen Ruhm als Violinvirtuose. Engagements erster Konzertinstitute werden die Folge sein." *(Tagebücher* [see note 9], p. 402, no. 1122, June 3, 1918).
36. Supplementary manuscript (F. Klee, *Paul Klee* [see note 22], pp. 9f.): "Die Musik schöpferisch zu betreiben schien mir nicht verlockend bei der absteigenden Linie in der Geschichte des musikalischen Schaffens." Cf. the testimony of Karl Grebe, the cellist of the Weimar orchestra who participated in the regular quartet performances at Klee's house, in Grote, *Erinnerungen* (see note 22), pp. 58-63. The testimony of Feininger, *ibid.,* p. 75, is at variance with Grebe's assertion that Klee never played contemporary music, but seems conditioned by Feininger's general enthusiasm about Klee's musicality.
37. Cf. Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I (see note 18), p. 178, note 3.
38. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 179, no. 602, March 20, 1905: ". . . etwas ganz Neues . . ."
39. "Es sind zwei armselige Kinder, die sich mit Puppen abgeben, keine Philosophie, keine Litteratur, nur Linien und Formen, und zwar im Kinderstil, das heisst so wie Kinder es zeichnen würden. [. . .] Es gäbe eine erste Arbeit im neuen Sinn . . ." I am grateful to Christian Geelhaar for making a transcription of this unpublished letter available to me.
40. W. Grohmann, *Paul Klee,* Stuttgart, 1954, plate on p. 111; J. Glaesemer, *Paul Klee, Die farbigen Werke im Kunstmuseum Bern,* Berne, 1976, p. 61, plate 4, both without comment in the text.
41. *Paul und Fritz,* 1905, 19 (A): Glaesemer, *Die farbigen Werke,* p. 62, plate 6.
42. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 200, no. 714, November 1905: "Ein guter Moment in Oberhofen. Kein Intellekt, kein Ethos. Ueber diese Welt ein Betrachter oder im Weltganzen ein Kind. Der erste nicht zwiespältige Augenblick meines Lebens.
43. *Tagebücher,* p. 206, no. 748, January 1906: "Traum. Ich flog nach Haus, wo der Anfang ist. Mit Brüten und Fingerkauen begann es. Dann roch ich was oder schmeckte was. [. . .] Käme jetzt eine Abordnung zu mir und neigte sich feierlich vor dem Künstler, dankbar auf seine Werke weisend, mich wunderte das nur wenig. Denn ich war ja dort, wo der Anfang ist. Bei meiner angebeteten Madame Urzelle war ich, das heisst so viel wie fruchtbar sein."
44. Bloesch, "Ein moderner Graphiker" (see note 11), p. 98: "Auf seinem Bild des Konzertsaales und des Bahnhofes hält er nicht nur das Gegenständliche fest, sondern dieses in seinem fieberhaften Leben, im Vibrieren des Lichtes und der Luft, frei von allem, was Erfahrung und Erinnerung dabei mitschaffen. Ohne jede Logik der Vernunftschlüsse gibt er die Eindrücke wieder, wie sie ein Kind emfängt, aber nicht festhalten kann." Here follows the text quoted in note 11. The two drawings are reproduced in H. K. Roethel, *Paul Klee in München,* Berne, 1971, pp. 73, 75; vgl. C. Geelhaar, *Die Vorgeschichte der Tunisreise,* Berne, 1974, pp. 20f., 24f.
45. As Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I (see note 18), p. 182, asserts without giving specific proof.
46. 1883-85, 14 (A): Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I, p. 13, fig. 4.
47. 1911, 80 (A): *Ibid.,* p. 192, fig. 417.
48. *Pferderennen I,* 1911, 47: W. Grohmann, *Der Maler Paul Klee,* Cologne, 1966, p. 50, fig. 58.
49. *Eadweard Muybridge. The Stanford Years, 1872-1882, Catalog,* Stanford, 1972, figures on pp. 24, 104.
50. Other drawings of galloping horses in this series include *Reiter, Galopp,* 1911, 51 (B), Hamburg, Kunsthalle (C. Geelhaar, *Klee-Zeichnungen,* Cologne, 1975, plate 24), and *Pferderennen II,* 1911, 48 (B) (Geelhaar, *Vorgeschichte* [see note 44], figure on p. 23). Geelhaar, *ibid.,* p. 22, has clearly recognized that the *Candide* illustration is based on these drawings.
51. They still appear a year later in the drawing *Galoppierende Pferde II,* 1912, 87 (Klee, *Schriften* [see note 7], fig. 34).
52. Glaesemer's *(Handzeichnungen,* I [see note 18), p. 182) contention that Klee generally drew upon his childhood drawings when he created the *Candide* illustration is not borne out by any specific analogy. Pierce, *Paul Klee* (see note 5), pp. 111f., assumes even more specifically that Klee consulted his childhood drawings for this task, but offers for proof merely a rather unconvincing comparison between the childhood drawing *Mann? Stuhl, Hase,* 1884, 18 (Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I, p. 16, fig. 11) and a preparatory sketch for the illustration for chapter 14 (1911, 97 [A], *ibid.,* p. 194, fig. 423).
53. *Der Blaue Reiter* (see note 14), figures 9, 10, 36, 51, 78-81.
54. *Die Gewärtigen,* 1912, 124 (A): Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I (see note 18), p. 208, fig. 476. Other drawings where this scheme is used include figures 477, 478, 483, 490, 492, 494, 503.
55. Cf. G. Rouma, *Le language graphique de l'enfant,* 2nd edition, Brussels, 1913, chapter I (pp. 15ff. in the Spanish translation, Buenos Aires, 1917, available to me); Pierce, *Paul Klee* (see note 5), pp. 77f.
56. Pierce, *Paul Klee,* p. 77: "As it often happens, scholarship was slightly in advance of the taste of the day."
57. G. Kerschensteiner, *Die Entwicklung der zeichnerischen Begabung,* Munich, 1905.
58. Kerschensteiner, *Entwicklung,* p. 7: "Wie entwickelt sich die graphische Ausdrucksfähigkeit des *unbeeinflussten* Kindes vom primitiven Schema bis zur vollendeten Raumdarstellung?"
59. Pierce, *Paul Klee* (see note 5), p. 77, who also draws attention to Kerschensteiner's book as well as to other works on children's drawings published in the early twentieth century, accepts as their common result that children's drawing capabilities "evolve with a remarkable consistency in recognizable stages." As a result, he attempts to survey Klee's entire work, without chronological distinctions or historical considerations, for analogies to the assumed constant features of such stages.
60. Kerschensteiner, *Entwicklung* (see note 58), pp. 15ff.: "Die *ersten* graphischen Darstellungen des Kindes . . . sind . . . nur eine Niederschrift dessen, was das Kind von einem Gegenstande *weiss."* Here follows a description of the features of this stage. "Durch alle diese Umstände erscheint mir die Stufe des Schemas genügend charakterisiert als Stufe *der Niederschrift der begrifflichen Merkmale."*
61. *Ibid.,* p. 477.
62. *Ibid.,* p. 44, text for plate 4, figures 4 and 5: "Das Kind besitzt nur *dieses eine Schema vom Menschen."*
63. Pierce, *Paul Klee* (see note 5), p. 124, also thinks it is possible that Klee saw Kerschensteiner's book, without, however, drawing any conclusions.
64. Kerschensteiner, *Entwichlung* (see note 57), p. 20: the terms are "erscheinungsgemäss" and "formgemäss".
65. Cf. *ibid.,* plate 44, a watercolor of cows in a landscape by a thirteen-year-old boy whom Kerschensteiner regarded as an extraordinary talent.
66. Without reference to Kerschensteiner, Pierce, *Paul Klee* (see note 5), also considers "the schematic mode" as the kind of children's drawing which Klee adapted most extensively. See below, note 76.
67. Kerschensteiner, *Entwicklung* (see note 58), plate 95, fig. 4, text p. 320: "Die Aufgabe, ein Schneeballgefecht darzustellen, hat keine einzige neue Bewegung in das Schema gebracht."
68. E. g., Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I (see note 18), p. 208, figures 477, 478: *Hinriss zum Tanz, Ein unheimlicher Moment.*
69. Kerschensteiner, *Entwicklung,* p. 17.
70. *Kinder als Schauspieler,* 1913, 101 (A): Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I (see note 18), p. 219, fig. 502.
71. Cf. also the drawing *Entrüstung,* 1913, 16, Vienna, Albertina. J. Glaesemer, "Paul Klees persönliche und künstlerische Begegnung mit Alfred Kubin," *Pantheon,* 32 (1974), pp. 152-156, cf. p. 156, fig. 8.
72. E. g., *Der Orden vom hohen C,* 1921, 100, London, Collection Roland Penrose (M. Raynal et al., *From Picasso to Surrealism,* Geneva, 1950, plate on p. 168); *Puppentheater,* 1923, 21 (Glaesemer, *Die farbigen Werke* (see note 40), p. 211, plate 91): *Seltsames Theater,* 1929, 316 *(ibid.,* p. 258, plate 133).
73. *Vorführung des Wunders,* 1916, New York, Museum of Modern Art, which Goldwater, *Primitivism* (see note 2), p. 196, fig. 47, very aptly reproduces to illustrate his characterization of child-like features in Klee s work.
74. Cf. Pierce, *Paul Klee* (see note 5), pp. 105ff., Goldwater, *Primitivism,* p. 197.
75. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 290, no. 922, fall or winter 1913: "Ein naiver Stil. Der Wille liegt under Narkose." It must be admitted, though, that the term cannot be narrowed down to any specific group of drawings of these years. Cf. Glaesemer, *Handzeichnungen,* I (see note 18), p. 186.
76. Cf. Pierce, *Paul Klee* (see note 5), p. 83: "If anything, the order of appearance of the various devices [sc. of children's drawing] in Klee's mature work reverses the usual progression of stages." *Ibid.,* p. 110: "In the evo ution of Klee's mature work the reduction of all things to basic forms was an ultimate achievement but children *proceed* from the point at which Klee finally arrived."
77. Kerschensteiner, *Entwicklung* (see note 57), p. 508: ". . . jener künstlerischen Erziehung, die damit beginnt, eine Sache ernsthaft, sorgfältig und gründlich anzugreifen, jener künstlerischen Erziehung, die nicht mit dem Ausdruck spielt, die keine schönen Formen setzt, wo nichts zu sagen ist, der die *Ehrlichkeit* aller produktiven Arbeit höher steht, als der schöne Schein."
78. In 1908, Kerschensteiner outlined his position on art education in an address to the Werkbund congress: see below, note 109.
79. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 319, no. 933, summer 1914: "Den Chorus mysticus erfinden, der von einigen hundert Kinderstimmen vorgetragen werden müsste. Wer das könnte, der brauchte sich nicht strebend mühen. Die vielen Werkchen führen letzten Endes dahin."
80. See below, note 113.
81. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), pp. 307f, no. 926, April 16, 1914.
82. Cf. *ibid.,* p. 376, no. 1068, March 3, 1917, and p. 408, no. 1126a, August 24, 1918.
83. "Graphik," in: J. Glaesemer, ed., *Paul Klee. Das graphische und plastische Werk,* Berne, 1975, pp. 15-17.
84. *"Schöpferische Konfession":* cf. *ibid.,* p. 76, note 1; reprinted in P. Klee, *Das bildnerische Denken,* 3rd edition, Basel, 1911, pp. 76-80.
85. "Schöpferische Konfession," p. 80: "Auf, Mensch! Schätze diese Villegiatur, einmal den Gesichtspunkt wie die Luft zu wechseln und dich in eine Welt versetzt zu sehen, die ablenkend Stärkung bietet für die unvermeidliche Rückkehr zum Grau des Werktags."
86. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), pp. 323ff., no. 950-953, early in 1915.
87. "Schöpferische Konfession" (see note 84), p. 80: "Die Kunst spielt mit den letzten Dingen ein unwissend Spiel und erreicht sie doch!"
88. "Graphik" (see note 83), p. 17 "Die Kunst . . . spielt mit den Dingen ein unwissend Spiel. So wie ein Kind im Spiel uns nachahmt, ahmen wir im Spiel den Kräften nach, die die Welt erschufen und erschaffen."
89. T. Däubler, "Paul Klee." *Das Kunstblatt,* 2 (1918), pp. 24-27, cf. p. 24: "Wenn man nämlich solche scheinbar unbeholfenen Arbeiten . . . eingehend betrachtet, so kann man bald feststellen: heir ist nichts kindlicher Versuch geblieben! Im Gegenteil: die geringsten Zufälligkeiten sind ausgeschieden; alles was Klee gibt, muss vollgekonnte männliche Kunst genannt werden." *Ibid.,* p. 25: ". . . nur beim Maler, der wie ein Kind im Mannesalter schaut, kann es gelingen."
90. L. Zahn, *Paul Klee. Leben, Werk, Geist, Potsdam,* 1920, p. 23: "Hat nur Spielphantasie unwissender Kindlichkeit die Blätter des kosmischen Bilderbuches mit zarten Figuren und heiteren Farben gefüllt? Oder männliche, Scheinwirklichkeit überwindende Weisheit Erkenntnis letzter Dinge gestaltet? Kindliche Phantasie und tiefe Weisheit sind hier nicht Gegensätze, sindern Ergänzungen." Zahn goes on to quote the sentence from the "Schöpferische Konfession" quoted above, note 87.
91. See below, note 116.
92. See below, notes 116, 165.
93. E. H., in *Kunstchronik und Kunstmarkt,* new series, 31 (1920), p. 725: "So ein Dutzend Kleescher Zeichnungen in irgend einer Ausstellung konnte immer eine Art Erfrischung sein—nicht immer die beabsichtigte, man war froh, dem Allzusehrernstnehmen, wie es andere verlangen, enthoben zu sein; man freute sich an diesem scheinbar kindlich-naiven Gemüt. Klee hat die Gabe, einen zum wirklich naiven Schauen zu zwingen, . . . wie in einer Kinderstube den Anforderungen ihrer Beherrscher entsprechend, alles schön, wichtig und von einleuchtender Klarheit zu finden. Eine Zeitlang kann man das! Die Massenhaftigkeit dieser Klee-Ausstellung lässt auch da zu tief in die Maschinerie blicken, mit der der Reichtum echter Kinderphantasie ersetzt worden ist. Raffinement ist dafür kein Ersatz."
94. W. Wolfradt, "Der Fall Klee," *Freie deutsche Bühne,* 1 (1920), pp. 2123-2127, cf. p. 2125: "Obwohl [Klee] gewiss nicht einfach infantil (im Sinne der Psychiatrie), ist er die Landung der Hyperkompliziertheit in kindlicher Primitivität. Er mahnt, bei der unschuldigen und von Konventionen unbeeinträchtigten Phantasie und Farbenlust der Kinder in die Schule zu gehen. [. . .]Sein Schaffen (zu unbeschwert eigentlich, um es so zu benennen) ist eine erquickende Bresche in die Vorurteile des bürgerlichen Geschmacks. [. . .] Wenn cann aber der Träger dieser erlösenden Emanzipationsordre . . . von nicht wenig Herolden und Kunstbörsianern unter die ersten Namen der Gegenwart gereiht, als überragende Künstlerpersönlichkeit gefeiert unde seins Museumswürdigkeit und Kandidatur als Akademieprofessor propagiert worden ist, wird man auf die Verständnislosigkeit solcher Uberschätzung des Künstlers Klee hinweisen müssen. [. . .] Klee ist erwähnenswerter als Anti-Künstler denn als Künstler."
95. *Tagebücher* (see note 9), p. 248, no. 857, spring or summer 1909: "Wenn bei meinen Sachen manchmal ein primitiver Eindruck entsteht, so erklärt sich diese 'Primitivität' aus meiner Disziplin, auf wenige Stufen zu reduzieren. Sie ist nur Sparsamkeit, also letzte professionelle Erkenntnis. Also das Gegenteil von wirklicher Primitivität."
96. P. Klee, *Das bildnerische Denken* (see note 84), p. 451, dated July 3, 1922.
97. The following account till the end of the paragraph is based on M. Franciscono, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar,* Urbana, Chicago, and London, 1971, pp. 183ff.
98. *Ibid.,* pp. 180f.

99. The question why Gropius and the Bauhaus faculty thus far assembled decided on appointing Klee to their ranks has never been answered or even asked in the literature.
100. L. Schreyer, *Erinnerungen an Sturm und Bauhaus,* Munich, 1956, reproduced in F. Klee, *Paul Klee* (see note 22), pp. 246ff. (Here quoted). The date of the conversation can be inferred from references to Prinzhorn's *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken* which appeared in 1922 and which is mentioned as just published, and to Kandinsky's imminent arrival at the Bauhaus which took place in June of the same year.
101. Franciscono, *Walter Gropius* (see note 97), p. 163, note 34, has disqualified Schreyer's memoirs as "extremely unreliable anecdotes," on account of their blatant contradictions with material in the Bauhaus archives. Goldwater, *Primitivism* (see note 2), p. 200, uncritically uses Klee's statements to Schreyer in order to characterize his position on children's art as a whole.
102. Schreyer, *Erinnerungen* (see note 100), p. 246: Klee: "Gewiss, gewiss, Kinderspiel! Die Herren Kritiker sagen es oft, dass meine Bilder Kritzelein oder Schmierereien von Kindern gleichen. Mögen sie ihnen gleich sein!" According to Schreyer, Klee would even have gone on to say: "Die Bilder, die mein kleiner Felix gemalt hat, sind bessere Bilder als die meinen, die oft durch das Gehirn hindurchgetropft sind . . ."
103. *Ibid.,* p. 249: "Ich sage es oft, aber es wird manchmal nicht ernst genug genommen, dass sich uns Welten geöffnet haben und öffnen, die auch der Natur angehören, aber in die nicht alle Menschen hineinblicken, vielleicht wirklich nur die Kinder, die Verrückten, die Primitiven. Ich meine etwa das Reich der Ungeborenen und der Toten, das Reich dessen, was kommen kann, kommen möchte, aber nicht kommen muss, eine Zwischenwelt."
104. *Ibid.,* p. 249: "Die Phantasie ist in der Tat meine, Ihre, unser alle grösste Gefahr und der fatale Irrweg der sogenannten Künstler, Ausweg für alle, die ohne Schau in die geistige Wirklichkeit sind und diese bewusst oder unbewusst vortäuschen."
105. B. M. Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918-1945,* Cambridge, Mass., 1968, pp. 81ff.
106. K. Nonn, "Das staatliche Bauhaus in Weimar," *Kölnische Zeitung,* April 23, 1924, as quoted by Lane, *Architecture,* p. 82.
107. Schreyer, *Erinnerungen* (see note 100), p. 246: "Sie kennen ja die ausgezeichnete Arbeit von Prinzhorn. Uberzeugen wir uns doch selbst! Dieses Bild ist bester Paul Klee. Dieses auch und dieses auch. Sehen sie diese religiösen Bilder! Eine Tiefe und Kraft des Ausdrucks, die ich im religiösen Thema nie erreichen Könnte. Wahrhaftig erhabene Kunst. Eine unmittelbar geistige Schau."
108. *Das bildnerische Denken* (see note 84),p. 95: "Die Kulture dieser bildnerischen Mittel, ihre reine Aufzucht und ihre reine Verwendung. Die Sage von dem infantilismus meiner Zeichnung muss ihren Ausgangspunkt bei jenen linearen Gebilden genommen haben, wo ich versuchte, eine gegenständliche Vorstellung, sagen wir einen Menschen, mit reiner Darstellung des linearen Elementes zu verbinden."
109. Cf. Kerschensteiner, *Entwicklung* (see note 57), p. 477: ". . . weil [das Kind] überhaupt nur eine Linienbeschreibung dessen gibt, was es weiss, nämlich des Inhaltes seines äusserst dürftigen Begriffes." *Ibid.,* p. 476: "Erst allmählich auf Grund sorgfältiger, Jahre lang angestellter Beobachtungen und Vergleiche wird die Gegenstandsvorstellung immer reifer und reifer, sie *umfasst* nicht mehr allein die Bestandteile, sondern zwischen ihnen existieren *hundertfache Zusammenhänge* aller Art . . ."
110. *Das bildnerische Denken* (see note 84), p. 95: "Wollte ich den Menschen geben, so 'wie er ist', dann brauchte ich zu dieser Gestaltung ein so verwirrendes Liniendurcheinander, dass von einer reinen elementaren Darstellung nicht die Rede sein könnte, sondern eine Trübung bis zur Unkenntlichkeit einträte."
111. Undated lecture notes as published in *Das bildnerische Denken,* p. 103: "Bleiben wir also vorläufig beim primitivsten Mittel, der Linie. In Vorzeiten der Völker, wo Schreiben und Zeichnen noch zusammenfällt, ist sie das gegebene Element. Auch unsere Kinder beginnen meist damit; sie entdecken eines Tages das Phanomen des beweglichen Punktes, und man kann sich kaum mehr vorstellen, mit welcher Begeisterung. [. . .] Die Chaotik des ersten Spiels weicht einer anfäglichen Gesetzmässigkeit. Die Freiheit der Linienführung unterwirft sich der zu erwartenden Endwirkung, vorsichtshalber beginnt nun ein Wirken mit ganz wenigen Linien. Man bleibt primitiv.
Aber bei der Primitivität kann man doch nicht gut verharren. Man wird einen Modus entdecken müssen, das armselige Endergebmis zu bereichern, ohne die übersichtlich-einfache Anlage zu zerstören, verwischen."
112. *Ibid.,* p. 95: "Wie ihnen jenes 'infantile" Beispiel sagt, gebe ich nicht mit Teiloperationen ab: Ich bin auch Zeichner."
113. *Ibid.:* "Manchmal träume ich ein Werk von einer ganz grossen Spannweite durch das ganze elementare, gegenständliche, inhaltliche und stilistische Gebiet. Das wird sicher ein Traum bleiben . . . Es kann nichts überstürzt werden. . . . wenn as dann einmal an der Zeit ist, jenes Werk, desto besser! [. . .] Wir fanden Teile dazu, aber noch nicht das Ganze."
114. Lecture note of 1922, as published *ibid.,* p. 31 of introduction: "Der Mensch ist nicht fertig. Man muss in Entwicklung bleiben, offen, sein, auch im Leben gehobenes Kind, Kind der Schöpfung, des Schöpfers."
115. *Ibid.,* p. 95: "Wir haben noch nicht diese letzte Kraft, denn: uns trägt kein Volk. Aber wir suchen ein Volk, wir begannen damit, drüben am staatlichen Bauhaus."
116. A. Schardt, "Das Ubersinnliche bei Paul Klee," *Museum der Gegenwart,* 1 (1930), 36-46, cf. p. 42: "Es entsteht [sc. in the work of the artist] die übersinnliche Formengebung, bei der jedoch weder das Oberbewusstsein Angst vor den Dämonen hat wie bei den Primitiven, noch die Bewusstseinsreife fehlt wie beim Kinde, noch das Oberbewusstsein wie beim Geistestkranken, entmündigt und vollkommen ausgeschaltet ist, sondern die ausbrechenden Kräfte gewähren lässt, sie durch sich hindurchlässt, ohne ihnen seine eigenen Bewusstseinsformen aufzudrängen, aber doch durch sein Dabeisein dem Ganzen den notwendigen übergeordneten Sinn verleiht."
117. H. F. Geist, "Kinder über Paul Klee," *Das Kunstblatt,* 14 (1930), pp. 21-26.
118. *Ibid.,* p. 21: "Jeder, der den unendlichen Zaubergarten, die geheimnisvolle Welt Paul Klees entdeckt hat, . . . der weiss von der Verwandtschaft, die zwischen den Werken Paul Klees und dem Schaffen der Kinder besteht. [. . .] Die schöpferischen Kräfte in den Künstlern, in Klee, in den Kindern, sie sind die Sonne, die die Welt belebt, durchleuchtet und erwärmt. [. . .] Ich kenne die Welt des Kindes, . . . weil es gelungen ist, über den Bankrott des Intellekts zum Kinde heimzukehren. [. . .]Die Gesellschaft eine Organisation zweckmässiger Funktionäre, von Henkern regiert."
119. F. Stern, *Kulturpessimismus als politische Gefahr,* Berne, Stuttgart, and Vienna, 1963, p. 161.
120. Cf. Lane, *Architecture* (see note 105), pp. 87ff.
121. This is how W. Laqueur, *Weimar Culture,* New York, 1974, p. 68, characterizes the magazine.
122. R. Arnheim, "Klee Für Kinder," *die Weltbühne,* 26 (1930), pp. 170-173, cf. p. 171: "Während die Saison-Ismen, um die so viel verlogener Lärm gemacht worden ist, eilends zum Freskenstil für Provinzkonditoreien herabgesunken sind . . . , steht Paul Klee noch hoch in der Wertschätzung und im Preise. Er verdankt das der zufälligen Tatsache, dass seine Bilder und Zeichnungen voll kindlichen Figurenwerks sind und damit die Bedürfnisse eines Bürgertums befriedigen, das sich bei Sofapuppen und allerlei Grotesknippes, in koketter Verachtung für alles Geistige und Problematische, von den Schrecken der grossen Zeit erholt. Man kauft für viele hundert Mark ein Blättchen Papier, auf das mit ungelenker Hand ein paar Zweiglein oder Männerchen gemalt sind und das beinahe von der unmündigen Tochter des Hauses stammen könnte . . . [. . .]Dem Maler Klee ist es gelungen, sich mit seiner Hände Arbeit zu einem Stadium durchzuringen, das alle anderen Menschen als Quintaner durchmachen, wenn sie, vom Unterricht gelangweilt, ihre Löschblätter bemalen . . . [. . .]Es ist peinlich zu sehen, wie einer, während die Mitwelt in Weltgeschichte unterrichtet wird, in einer Ecke sitzt und auf seinen Löschblättern herumkritzelt."
123. See above, note 94.
124. H. F. Geist, "Paul Klee und die Welt des Kindes," *Werk,* 37 (1950), pp. 186-192, reprinted in Grote, *Erinnerungen* (see note 22), pp. 84-93.
125. The article is evidently part of a self-serving effort at rehabilitation on the part of the author who had compromised himself thoroughly under the National Socialist regime.
126. Geist, "Paul Klee" (see note 124), pp. 190f.: "Verbinden Sie meine Arbeiten nicht mit denen der Kinder. Es handelt sich um entfernte Welten."
127. *Ibid.,* p. 186: "Der formale Aufbau seines Bildes ist ihm gleichgültig. Er geschieht aus unbewusster Sicherheit, aus angeborenem Instinkt, während as auf der inhaltlichen Seite ein Vorstellungsbild verwirklicht."
128. *Ibid.:* "Vergessen Sie niemals: das Kind weiss nichts von Kunst."
129. *Ibid.:* "Das hat seine Ursache darin, dass der Künstler sein Bewusstsein überwiegend auf die formale Seite, auf den Aufbau seines Bildes konzentriert, während das Unterbewusste, das Inhaltliche, im Hintergrund bleibt."
130. *Ibid.,* pp. 188f.: "Das Kind ist erfüllt, überfüllt von Bildern, die as bedrängen, die es loswerden muss, um sich in seiner Welt zurechtzufinden.—Sein Zeichnen ist eine biologische Notwendigkeit. [. . .] Es muss das Gesehene, das Erlebte, das Gewünschte, das Geträumte, das Feindliche, das Freundliche aussprechen, umsetzen, bannen, festhalten."
131. *Ibid.,* p. 189: "Der Künstler, wie ich ihn meine . . . hat das Sichtbare hinter sich, in sich verarbeitet in sich versenkt, so sehr es ihn nährt. Er muss fortschreiten zum Bild. Die sichtbare Welt ist in ihrer blossen Sichtbarkeit für ihn erschöpft. Er wagt den Schritt über die Dinge hinaus. Er überschreitet die Realität; er schmilzt sie auf, um die innere ins Sichtbare zu heben."
132. See above, note 86.
133. See above, note 131.
134. See above, note 95.
135. Geist, "Paul Klee' (see note 124), p. 190: "Das Kind handelt absolut anders. Es steht *vor* der Realität.—Vielleicht muss der Künstler dieses Nichtmehr- weiter-können vor dem Sichtbaren einsehen, erfahren, um der Schöpfung nahezukommen . . ."
136. Ibid., p. 192: "Das Kind will voran, will weiter, will nicht auf frühen Stufen beharren. [. . .] Was weiss ein Sechzehnjähriger alles vom Baum, vom Schiff, vom Aeroplan. Er ist nicht fähig, so viel Wissen in Formen zu setzen. Soll er darum, wenn ihn das Künstlerische lockt, auf das Bilden verzichten, sich auf Naturmotive beschränken . . ."
137. *Ibid.,* pp. 189f.: "Das Kind zeichnet, wie es denkt. Seine Gebilsind Realisationen eines Denkprozesses." Cf. Kerschensteiner, as quoted above, note 109.
138. *Ibid.,* p. 192: "Die eminent intellektuelle Entwicklung unseres Jahrhunderts erlaubt uns—auf anderen Gebieten—endlich wieder Schöpfer zu sein. Das unterscheidet uns von allem Vergangenen."
139. *Ibid.,* p. 188: "Der Maler bildet, und es entsteht ein Gebilde. Ohne Zutun des Willens zunächst, ohne Wissen, ohne inhaltliche Absicht. [. . .] Das Kind . . . stellt die Absicht vor das Bilden, oder sie kommt ihm sofort nach dem Beginn. Es will etwas zeichnen. Nur das Kleinkind, im ersten Stadium, deutet, forscht, entdeckt Möglichkeiten. Es spielt." The distinction of a "first stage" of infant drawing before image-making corresponds to Kerschensteiner's sequential scheme.
140. See above, notes 77, 87, and 88.
141. H. F. Geist, *Die Wiedergeburt des Künstlerischen aus dem Volk. Ein Buch von der Kunst des Volkes und ihrer Bestätigung im Schaffen des Kindes als Beispiel praktischer Volkstumsarbeit,* Leipzig, 1934.
142. *Ibid.,* p. 14.
143. *Ibid.,* p. 12.
144. *Ibid.,* pp. 222f.
145. *Ibid.,* pp. 74, 104.
146. *Ibid.,* p. 74.
147. *Ibid.,* pp. 73f.
148. *Ibid.,* p. 80.
149. *Ibid.,* p. 74.
150. *Ibid.,* p. 181.
151. *Ibid.,* p. 184.
152. *Ibid.,* pp. 73, 173.
153. *Ibid.,* p. 105.
154. A. Diel, *Die Kunsterziehung im Dritten Reich,* Munich, 1969.
155. Stern, *Kulturpessimismus* (see note 119), p. 162.
156. Diel, *Kunsterziehung* (see note 154), pp. 137ff.
157. *Ibid.,* pp. 194, 228f.
158. *Ibid.,* p. 217.
159. Geist, *Wiedergeburt* (see note 141), pp. 173, 179f.
160. E. Kornmann, *Die Theorie von Britsch als Grundlage der Kunsterziehung,* Düsseldorf, 1931; cf. Diel, *Kunsterziehung* (see note 154), pp. 176ff.
161. Diel, *Kunsterziehung,* pp. 235f., 302f.
162. Diel, *Ibid.,* pp. 127f.), relates the report of the Berlin art teacher Parnitzke who between 1919 and 1926 exhibited works by his Jewish pupils, clearly recognizable to him by what he saw as both their primitivism and decadence, apart from those by the rest of the class. According to Parnitzke, even Cizek, in his youth art school at Vienna, claimed to distinguish works by Jewish from those by 'Aryan' pupils on similar grounds. Another Berlin art teacher, Philipp Franck, in his book *Das schaffende Kind,* Berlin, n.d. (1930), derived from the axiom "Art comes out of the blood" (*ibid.,* p. 82) a hypothesis about the selection of talented children on the basis of blood groups, and at the same time projected both children and folk art as a national German ideal (*ibid.,* p. 60).
163. Diel, *Kunsterziehung,* pp. 300, 302.
164. See above, note 115.
165. R. Scholz, "Kunstgötzen stürzen", *Deutsche Kultur-Wacht,* 1933, fascicle 10, p. 5, quoted after J. Wulf, *Die bildenden Künste im Dritten Reich,* Gütersloh, 1963, p. 55: "Und dass man Paul Klee einmal als grossen Künstler ansehen konnte, wird für künftige Generationen eines der deutlichsten Exempel des völligen geistigen Verfalls der individualistischen Kunstepoche sein. Dinge, die nur die Lachmuskel reizen konnten, wie das irrsinnige, kindische Geschmiere eines Klee, wurden als der Gipfelpunkt schöpferischer Sensibilität angepriesen."
166. See above, note 11.

THE STRUCTURE OF PAUL KLEE'S ART IN THE TWENTIES: FROM CUBISM TO CONSTRUCTIVISM

JIM. M. JORDAN

The period of the '20s is the keystone of Klee's career: it saw the fruition of Klee's earlier period of study and assimilation, and in the later '20s stylistic decisions were made upon which Klee's later development is predicated.

For Paul Klee, 1920 was a year of success and recognition. Two monographs were published on him, and a third was in preparation. Klee had recently signed a sales contract with the Goltz Gallery in Munich, which held a large retrospective exhibition of his work that year. Late in 1920, Klee was delighted to receive an invitation to join the faculty of the Bauhaus, which had been recently founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar.

Recognition had been slow in coming to Klee. He had worked for a decade and a half with no conspicuous notice in Munich, where he had studied earlier in the academy. While he was a member of the Blue Rider in 1911-12, Klee came late to the group, and was only a marginal figure compared with Kandinsky and Franz Marc. The war had dispersed the Munich group, killing Marc and August Macke on the battlefield, and destroying the Expressionists' hopes. The Bauhaus appointment placed Klee at the most important center of post-war activity in Germany. Something of the excitement and comradeship of pre-war Munich was recreated; but the new milieu had a much broader basis: the collaborative group of Bauhaus architects and designers, painters and craftsmen, intended to explore and reform the most basic assumptions about art and culture. Klee experienced no doubt great satisfaction in being recognized as a senior, first-generation modernist in this active artistic and intellectual surrounding. This must account in part for the strength and consistency of Klee's 1920s production—by far the most widely known works of his oeuvre.

The '20s period is the keystone of Klee's career. It saw the fruition of Klee's earlier period of study and assimiliation, and in the later '20s stylistic decisions were made upon which Klee's development in the '30s is predicated. Yet past studies of Klee in the '20s have been far from satisfactory. Central stylistic issues have gone largely unidentified and unexamined, and peripheral matters have received undue attention.

We have, for example, extensive publication of Klee's Bauhaus theoretical notes.[1] But these notes typically are discussed, glossed, and illustrated with works from not only the '20s, but the whole range of Klee's career; as if like a scripture they wholly reveal a timeless, non-historical Klee, unchanging from beginning to end. Klee's theories are certainly very important, but the too generalized quotation of them evokes a falsely consistent, hermetic idea of Klee.

This does Klee a disservice, for one of his greatest strengths over the years was his ability to adopt and respond to the art movements around him: Expressionism, Cubism, Constructivism, and others. And it is ultimately condescending to judge Klee by only his own theoretical rules, to consider him as a phenomenon apart in the history of modern art. For Klee is a structural modernist of considerable stature, and his forms hold up well in qualitative comparisons with those of even the boldest minds of his innovative generation.

It has not been the custom, in the literature, to discuss Klee in structural terms. His work of the '20s is more commonly approached through its intricacies of image and iconography, through its inventive techniques, or through tabulation of its many "families" of formal motifs. Thus we have topical discussions of Klee's masks or fish images, of his "continuous intersecting lines," "stripes and screens," and "magic squares," or "parallel figurations" and "structural rhythms."[2] All these matters have their place, but none of them indicates a clear stylistic direction for Klee in the '20s. I have found however that formal analysis does yield such a direction. A logic is revealed through which Klee changes the structural basis of his art from Cubism to Constructivism over the years 1922-27.

This formal discovery provides a framework moreover for further analysis of Klee's iconography, techniques, and his proliferating "modes" of the '20s. The shift from Cubism to Constructivism is paralleled, for example, by a shift from a highly personal, romantic imagery to an iconography reflecting more impersonal, "objective" concerns. We can compare the darkly legendary *Night Feast* of 1921 (now in the Guggenheim) with *Perspective of a City,* 1928 (ill. in Grohmann, *Paul Klee,* p. 219), a vision of crisp planes and geometric order. The earlier picture of a magic hamlet, glowing with occult, allusive symbols, is a setting for a Grimm's fairy tale, or to appropriate another Klee title of 1922, for a "God of the Northern Woods." The later work, while still full of fantasy, more resembles the imaginings of an engineer, a projection of architectural orderliness worthy of a de Stijl city planner. In a similar way, we could contrast Klee's intentionally fuzzy and evocative transfer techniques of the early '20s with his preference later in the decade for the precise instruments of the mechanical draftsman. Klee's modal families, based on a single formal device, typically include a large number of works dating over two or three years. But new order can be given to even the stripes and screens and parallel figurations when the Cubism-Constructivism criterion is applied. As the '20s progresses, we observe Klee tightening up these pictorial modes, applying them in increasingly closed and systematic ways—reflecting the Constructivist characteristic of absolute, uninflected form.

Klee's change in structure from Cubism to Constructivism took place at the Bauhaus and was Klee's positive response, through his art, to that changing, problematic milieu. Klee's change reflects a more general movement within the Bauhaus, and was the result of Klee's contact with the younger Constructivists on the staff such as Moholy-Nagy. Lasting in its effect, Klee's Constructivist phase marks the transition from his middle to late period and it is thus a key chapter in Klee's stylistic history.

Recent historians of the Bauhaus emphasize that the school underwent several crises and changes. From 1923 on, an early Expressionist and hand-craft orientation was replaced by a progressively more Constructivist and production-design aesthetic. The change was signaled by the arrival of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy who, in 1923, took over the Bauhaus introductory course (*Vorkurs*) from the romantic mystic Johannes Itten.[3]

Moholy-Nagy came from the Constructivist circle gathering in Berlin, which included by late 1921 Kandinsky, El Lissitzky, Gabo, and Pevsner, all freshly arrived from the Constructivist avant-garde of revolutionary Russia. A comprehensive and well publicized exhibition of modern Russian art was held in Berlin in 1922, with installations by Lissitzky. Kandinsky went to the Bauhaus in 1922 with a new painting style clearly reflecting Constructivism. Lissitzky and others were in Weimar in the autumn of 1922 for the so-called "Congress of the Constructivists," where they joined forces with Theo van Doesburg, the leader of the Dutch de Stijl, to form a loose international union of Constructivists.

Younger Bauhaus masters such as Oskar Schlemmer and Josef Albers developed Constructivist form. Moholy-Nagy was the editor-designer of the Bauhaus-Books which epitomized the new Constructivist typography and published several Constructivist texts.[4] Klee could hardly have failed to be influenced. After 1926 however, the Dessau Bauhaus became increasingly in-

hospitable to Klee because of his romantic approach and his old-fashioned, individualistic commitment to easel painting. While Constructivist philosophy eventually led Klee in 1931 to leave the Bauhaus, Klee had yet responded very positively to Constructivist art during those years.

Much earlier, over 1912-14, Paul Klee had adopted the pictorial structure of Cubism. He learned of Cubism in the Blue Rider milieu, seeing Cubist works in Munich exhibitions of 1911-13, visiting Paris and meeting Delaunay in the autumn of 1912, and becoming acquainted, probably in 1913, with the pioneer collection of Cubists formed in Klee's home city of Bern by Kahnweiler's friend and associate Hermann Rupf. By a slow process, which I have detailed elsewhere,[5] Klee assimilated the Analytic Cubist form language in three stages: first he took up the Cubist geometric facet; then he adopted the Cubist shape interrelationship, translucent spatial *passage;* and finally he assimilated the Analytic Cubist style of centralized composition. Klee lifted Cubist structure from its original context in the Parisian still-life sensibility, and used it for the realization of his own very different, metaphysical goals.

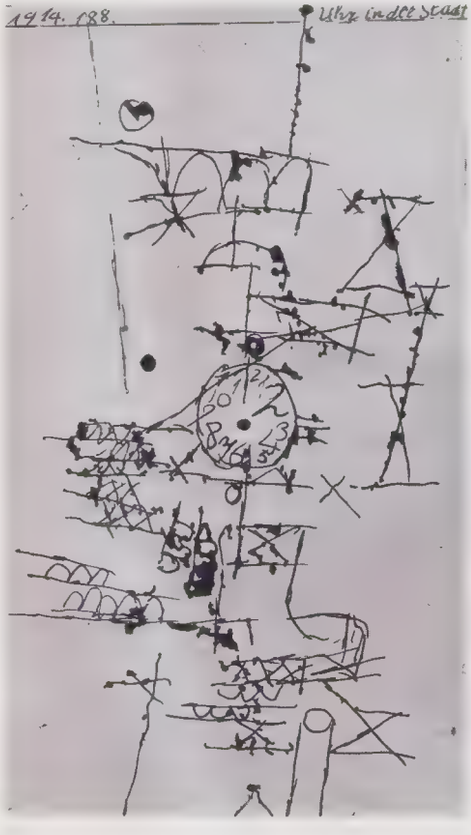
A comparison will show Klee's borrowings from high Analytical Cubism, and will demonstrate the sureness with which, by mid-1914, he used this structural idiom. We may look at Klee's 1914 drawing *Clock in the City* (Fig. 1), done soon after Klee's return from North Africa, along with Georges Braque's *Fox* (Fig. 2), an etching of 1911.[6] In the high Analytical Cubist Braque the shapes are geometric, angular, and are felt to be the facets or shards of a displaced reality—in this case, as usual with Braque, a still life reality. The Klee shapes likewise are geometric, regularized fragments of a view—an imaginary cityscape. The relationships of Braque's shapes to one another are highly ambiguous. The facets in *Fox* seem to overlap, and at times to pass freely through one another, in ways that produce a number of different—but simultaneous—spatial readings. Many planes are tilted relative to the picture plane, having one edge on the surface, and a back edge resting on, and serving to locate in depth, the back wall of a shallow, implied spatial box. Through this spatial inflection or *passage,* a non-perspectival space is created. The pattern has graphic consistency on the surface, yet is capable of visually precise and infinitely variable measurement into depth.

In Paul Klee's drawing too, the facets seem to intersect and interpenetrate each other in ambiguous ways (Fig. 1). And with their tilting *passage* or devolution from the foremost to backmost plane, they generate the classic Cubist space. By adopting this space Klee possessed himself of a tool that was rigorous and measurable, yet subtle and ambiguous; exact yet mysterious. It provided a secure structural basis for the elaboration of his fantasy.

Typical Analytical Cubist composition is similarly present in the Klee and the Braque. Two-dimensionally, the forms are quite thin around the edges; they thicken and coalesce toward the centers. Three-dimensionally, the border areas are flat, with a congruency of picture surface and background. Toward the middle in both Figures 1 and 2, space deepens as the graphic forms accumulate in the center to a maximum of spatial richness and complexity.

The essence of Klee's change over the Bauhaus years from Cubism to Constructivism can be seen by comparing *Clock in the City* to *Accomplished* (Fig. 3), a pen drawing of 1927. In the Cubist Klee drawing (Fig. 1), an active tension is felt between the two-dimensional surface and its three-dimensional implications. Compositionally, too, a tension is felt between the random intuitive distribution of the shapes and the tendency—expressed in the larger compositional lines—to align them along the internal coordinates of the rectangular field. By contrast, Klee's shapes in *Accomplished* are closed, regular, and generated by a rhythmic, repetitious system. While closed in contour the shapes of Figure 3 are yet wholly transparent in their interrelationships. They may be read as a two-dimensional graphic pattern or as a transparent crystalline structure floating in an undefined space. The absence of *passage,* or of any strong indication of a foreground-background slant to the planes, dictates that all planes be read as parallel in space. The composition too is governed by internal concerns of system and imagery. The forms are added up to a description of an abstract city with comparatively little reference to the boundaries of the field. In all aspects then, the active tensions and inconsistencies of the Cubist drawing have been resolved in *Accomplished* in favor of system, the appearance of construction, and complete transparency.

The most significant change is the rejection of *passage,* which Klee had employed regularly since 1913. The 1927 work, lacking this spatial control, may be read as perfectly flat or absolutely deep. The background wall of the picture box, always ambiguous but always present in Cubism, has dropped out,



◄**Fig. 1.** Paul Klee, Clock in the City, 1914. *Pen and ink on paper, 6¼ x 33½". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

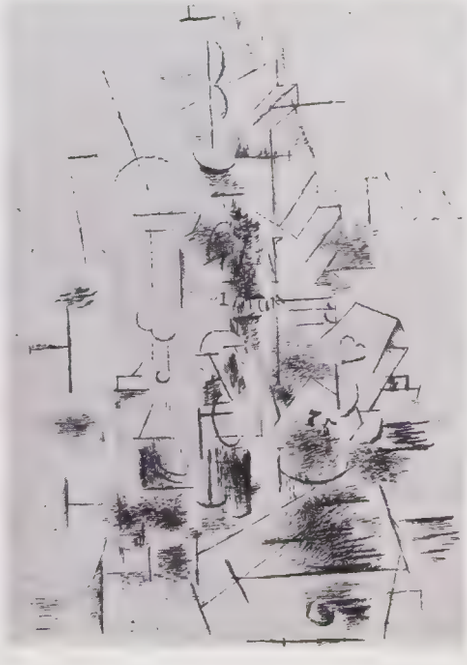


Fig. 2. Georges Braque, Fox, 1911. *Etching, 21½ x 15". Collection Museum of Modern Art, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund.*

Fig. 3. Paul Klee, Accomplished, 1927. *Pen and ink on paper, 9-5/8 x 18-1/8". Courtesy Sotheby Parke Bernet.*

producing an infinity of suggested space. This undefined void is the same as that employed by both the Constructivists and the abstract Surrealists, such as Miró, in the 1920s and '30s.

In linear method, Klee's run-on contour in *Accomplished* somewhat resembles the automatic drawing of such Surrealists as André Masson. Masson's psycho-graphic line is irregular and random, purporting to create its forms by chance. Klee's line by contrast is extremely controlled, a self-defining geometric system. Masson evokes his imagery from subconscious latency, while Klee constructs his fantasy with conscious logic. The geometric rigor of Klee's line is paralleled in some contemporaneous Kandinskys; but Kandinsky usually avoids Klee's emphasis on uncompromising system. And Kandinsky, like most other early modernists, avoided the symmetry inherent in many of Klee's systems—as here in the right-hand tower of *Accomplished.*

We have observed, in essence, Klee adopting the relativism of Cubist structure and subsequently replacing it with absolutism. But we have demonstrated as well the remarkable thoroughness with which Klee, the provincial Swiss-German, availed himself of the most advanced formal discoveries of his time. He not only mastered these forms, but made them yield meanings and serve purposes far different from those of their original inventors. A new picture of Klee emerges in this context. Beyond the traditional image of the dreamy sorcerer's apprentice, we can see Klee the sharp-eyed formal analyst. He tests and appraises the various stylistic currents around him, turning their forms to his own use while preserving undiminished their structural strength.

It is worthwhile to examine a couple of the stages of Klee's '20s metamorphosis in greater detail. We may, by key comparisons, place him more firmly in context. The Bauhaus was a stylistic crucible, drawing from all the streams and cross-currents of a turbulent decade. Opposing "isms" stood in evident contrast there: mystic Expressionism and Constructivism, Dada and de Stijl. Klee reflects all this and, what is more, gives us new stylistic information on these conflicting forces. For Klee, more than most artists, was an astute and calculated observer. His response to an incoming influence often sheds light on the nature of the outside source itself. The closed quality of Klee's Constructivism, as we have seen, highlights the open, relativistic nature of his—and all—Cubism. As a consequence, Cubism's dependence upon the informality and pragmatism of Impressionism is emphasized. One term of the argument the cooler artists of the '20s had with Cubism is reclarified.

The 1920 drawing and 1921 painting of *Barbarian Venus* (Figs. 4 and 5) embody the style Klee brought with him to the Bauhaus, and thus provide a base line from which details and comparisons can be considered. Between 1914 and 1919, the linear element had been subordinated in Klee's work to the interests of tone and color, as Klee sought to develop these elements into a vocabulary for painting. This was the period of the powerful colorism of *The Niesen* (1915) and *With the Eagle* (1918).[7] Over 1919-20, Klee's linear fantasy was allowed to reemerge in the newly matured spatial context, as in *Barbarian Venus,* a prime example of his famous oil-transfer-color technique. The line pattern is first fully realized in the drawing, then transferred by a hand-made "carbon paper" to the plaster-coated ground. There it is given by application of oil and watercolor a Cubist spatial context.

In Figure 5 line provides the shape, color provides *passage.* The effect is observed along the contours. The transfer line lies on the surface, and the colors—rust-red and gray—slope away, inflecting the edge with spatial significance. In another way of saying this, the red and gray ground buckles up visually, to engage the surface along each line.

Klee presents in *Barbarian Venus* an intricate fantasy about alien beauty. It includes literal body-face imagery, references to West-African sculpture, and hints in the tuber-like limbs of a disturbing vegetable-human combination. While not Freudian in the Surrealist sense, it is a frankly sexual fantasy bearing disquieting, even sinister undertones about man's subconscious, irrational nature. But the fantasy is pictorialized within a wholly rational structural tradition.

Here Klee already reflects a post-Cubist inclination in his tendency to separate, technically and aesthetically, the functions of line and color. In *Barbarian Venus* they are still inter-

Fig. 4. Paul Klee, Drawing to Barbarian Venus, 1920. *Pencil on paper, 109 x 85¼". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

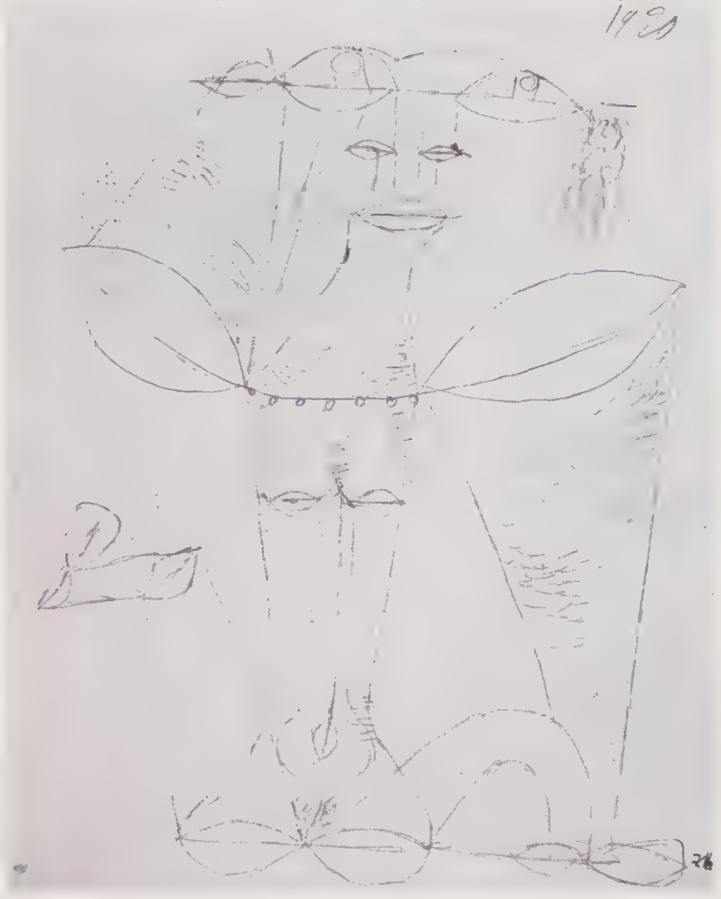


Fig. 5. Paul Klee, Barbarian Venus, 1921. *Oil, oil transfer drawing, and opaque watercolor on plaster-coated gauze, on painted board, 16-1/8 x 10½". Courtesy The Norton Simon Museum at Pasadena, The Blue Four Galka Scheyer Collection.* ►

Fig. 6. Paul Klee, Tightrope Walker, 1923. *Lithograph, 17-3/8 x 10½".* ►

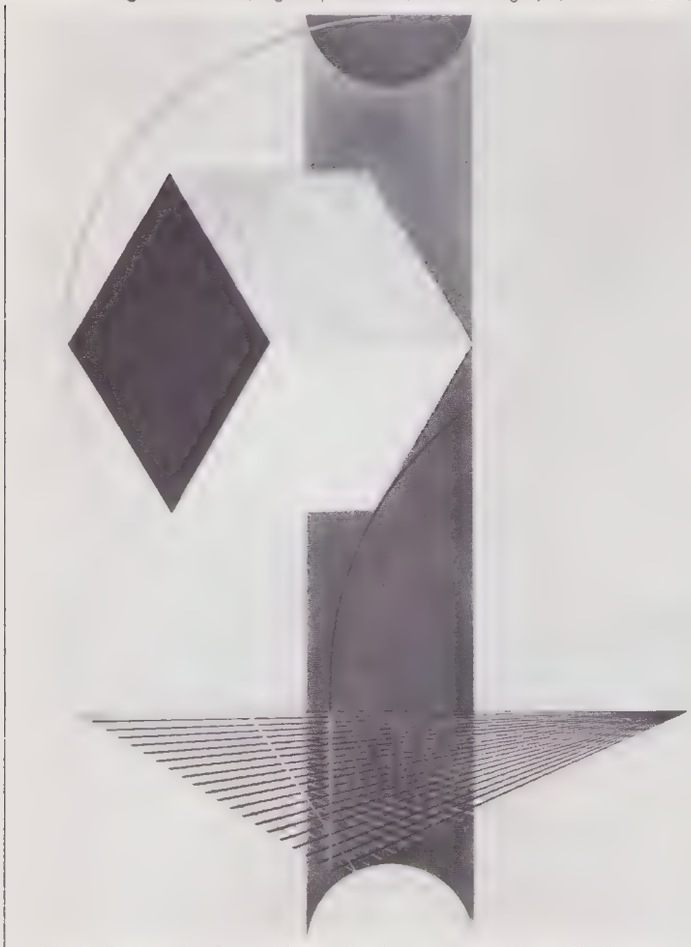
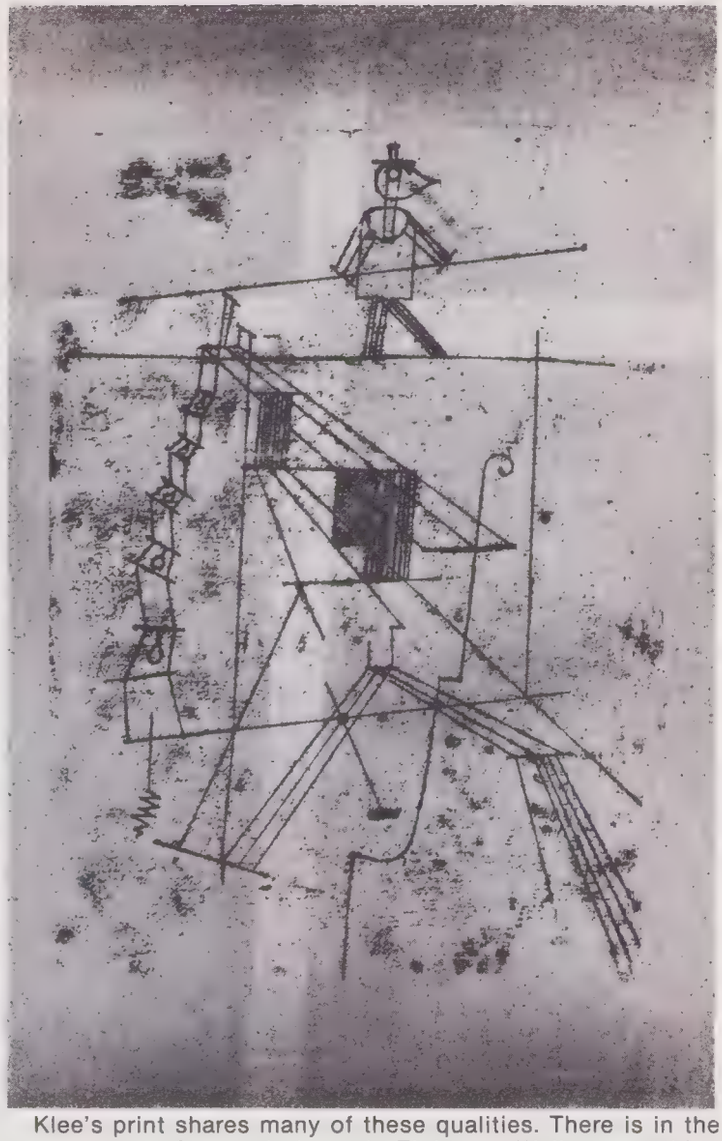


Fig. 7. El Lissitzky, Proun 99, c. 1924. *Oil on wood, 50¾ x 39". Courtesy Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of the Société Anonyme.*

related. Over the next several years this interrelationship will dissolve, and color will take on an elemental autonomy equal to that of line.[8]

In *Tightrope Walker,* a lithograph of 1923 (published by the Bauhaus press) (Fig. 6), the interrelationship between line and background has already been severely limited. Color inflection is no longer applied to each line. The principal mediations remaining between line and color ground are the tonal gradations at the top and bottom of the field, and the congruence of the tightrope and the horizontal cross element in white. With the Cubist qualification thus weakened, Klee's line drawing takes on much the feeling of a disembodied construct. This likely reflects knowledge of Constructivist works similar to El Lissitzky's *Proun 99* of c. 1924 (Fig. 7). Both works appear to represent assemblages of wire-like lines and geometric elements suspended in a void.

The perspective grid in the Lissitzky is a veritable illustration of the spatial doctrines of Constructivism. The grid establishes the illusion of a Renaissance perspective plane receding toward a horizon with vanishing points. The plane is, however, wholly disembodied and transparent, renouncing any reference to the physical world. Lissitzky's three precisely equal lozenges in mid-picture are aligned in the abstract, isometric projection used by engineers, and form a pure, theoretical cube. This perfect, suspended solid is juxtaposed, but not compromised, by the other elements of the composition. In the most articulate manifesto of the Russian Constructivist movement, Gabo and Pevsner had stated in 1921 that "Cubism, having started with simplification of the representative technique, ended with its analysis and stuck there. The distracted world of the Cubists, broken in shreds by their logical anarchy, cannot satisfy us who have already accomplished the Revolution or who are already constructing and building up anew." The forcefully stated tenets of the new movement proceed: "We renounce in a line, its descriptive value . . . We affirm the line only as a direction of the static forces and their rhythm in objects. We renounce volume as a pictorial and plastic form of space . . . We affirm depth as the only pictorial and plastic form of space."[9]



Klee's print shares many of these qualities. There is in the convergence of several planes in *Tightrope Walker* something of the perspective usage of the Constructivist. And with his floating cage work, Klee appears to be drawing in space. It is obvious, however, that the Constructivists' insistence on nonrepresentation and their uncompromising seriousness are not reflected by Klee. In contrast to the cold abstraction of the Lissitzky, Klee's little performer and his apparatus are a playful image, a toy machine.

A few years later in the early 1930s, Klee showed himself much aware of the illusional problem in his—and all other—Constructivist art. When abstract lines are drawn over a totally featureless ground, the eye, trained by the language of diagrams, readily translates them into an illusionistic rendering of something three-dimensional, like a wire sculpture. Klee put it this way: "One could suppose, many times, that something had been painted after nature, after a model so to speak, a wire model *(Drahtmodell)* or something similar. This kind of abstraction often piques the curiosity, but is it abstract?"[10]

By 1927 and the gouache *Sailboats* (Fig. 8), Klee's run-on generative contour fulfills itself in total freedom from qualification. As the eye follows the closed progressions of lines through angles—unravelling the images as it were—one is aware that the generative process presupposes a featureless, resistance-less milieu. The panes in *Sailboats* are totally transparent to one another, and in crossing they create smaller planes without spatial differentiation. The many colors are all equivalent, all identically flat, and in no way impede the feeling of near limitless plane multiplication. The ambiguous questions of Cubist space are here resolved by all answers, all orders being made equally possible. Only differences in size and in one's momentary concentration within the scheme offer temporary patterns of spatial layering and emphasis.

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's *A II* of 1924 (Fig. 9), with its nonobjective imagery, presents a harsh contrast to Klee's romantic whimsical boats. Yet Moholy-Nagy's floating planes provide a clear precedent for Klee. In neither work is there any inflection to show which planes lie foremost, or hindmost in space.

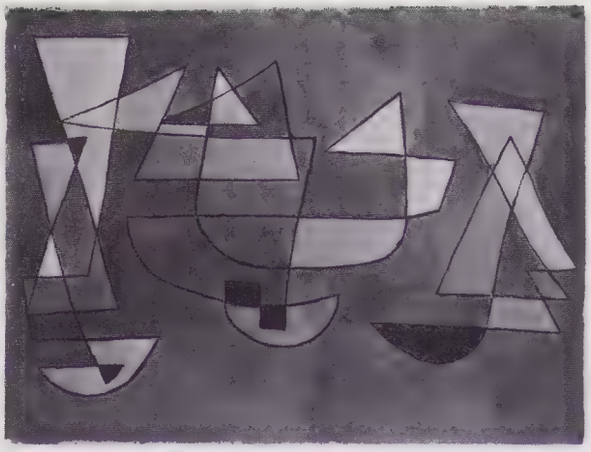


Fig. 8. Paul Klee, Sailboats, 1927. *Gouache on paper, approximately 8-5/8 x 11¾". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

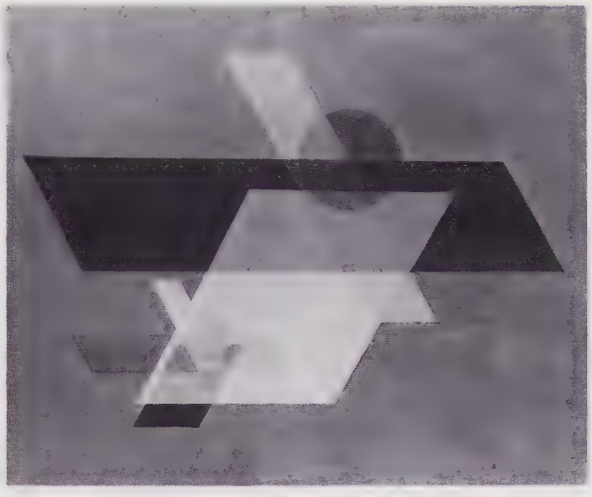


Fig. 9. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, A II, 1924. *Oil on canvas, 45-5/8 x 53-5/8". Courtesy Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.*

Moholy-Nagy's planes are the product of theoretical projection, disembodied configurations in space-time, one of this artist's central preoccupations. While in some of his theory lectures Klee parallels this high seriousness, in his art the playful is never wholly banished.

For the committed Constructivist like Moholy-Nagy, empty space and weightless bodies were not only thinkable, they were the habitual medium of creative thought. For Klee the former Cubist, however, empty space and weightless constructs had about them still something of the marvelous. Klee's *Hovering (Before the Ascent)* of 1930 (Fig. 10) is in one sense a parody of Constructivism. For Moholy-Nagy's orderly progression of planes, Klee substitutes a tangle of struts and screens that looks suspiciously like a large, eccentric box kite. Klee's work has a visual intricacy and double-entendre in which can be read a Cubist's mistrust of the Constructivist-purist's pretentious clarity. Klee's small narrative arrow demonstrates again that while he annexed Constructivist form, he used it in his own romantic-expressionist way.

One of the most intriguing Klee-Constructivist parallels of the whole period is between Klee's 1927 painting *Limits of the Intellect* (Fig. 11) and Naum Gabo's 1919-20 drawing *Project for a Radio Station* (Fig 12). Gabo's drawing, in its arched and massive footings, may show formal reminiscences of the Eiffel Tower, or possibly even Delaunay's renditions of that monument. Above the lower stages which include a naturalistic rendering of a building, Gabo's tower climbs as a linear construct in space. Perspective planes are mixed with freely cast lines. The tower is knit together visually, if not precisely architectually, by graphic continuity. Klee's tower in *Limits of the Intellect* reaches upward by similar means. Its base may be recognized, in one reading, as a cage-like human head, from the cerebral regions of which are projected the upward probing lines. Because it is thinner and more transparent than the Gabo, Klee's tower resembles a wire sculpture more than architecture. But there are more detailed similarities between these two works. In the Klee, the stereometric form of a triangular solid to the bottom left, the triangle to the bottom right, and the pair of

Fig. 10. Paul Klee, Hovering (Before the Ascent), 1930. *Oil on canvas, 33-1/8 x 33-1/8". Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*

reversed curves between them bear strong resemblance to the lower basis forms in the Gabo. The crossed and cantilevered planes of the middle zones of the two drawings are similar. Similar sharp changes in line direction, with the inclusion in both cases of representations of stairs or ladders, mark the upper reaches of both drawings. These details suggest that Klee may indeed have seen this Gabo.

Gabo recalls that his radio station drawing was in the 1922 exhibition of Soviet art at the Van Diemen Gallery in Berlin.[11] Klee could have seen it there, Gabo believes, or in other exhibitions of the '20s where it was shown in Germany. While lecturing on Constructivism at the Dessau Bauhaus (after 1925), Gabo met Klee and they had many friendly discussions. Gabo today recalls Klee's remarkable openness and lack of prejudice regarding Constructivism and the other nonobjective directions of the period.[12]

But the formal kinships of the Klee and Gabo works only serve to heighten their basic differences in meaning. The Gabo drawing reflects the widespread attempt in the early Soviet Union, between 1917 and 1922, to utilize the talent of leading fine artists—at least theoretically—for the visionary and ultimately practical solution of applied design problems. Bauhaus Constructivism paralleled this orientation. Gabo's radio station project here, like Tatlin's famous *Monument to the Third International,* was evidently more visionary than practical. But an elevated utilitarianism was clearly its goal. And the social seriousness of the anti-romantic art worker is communicated by the precisely controlled line, by the intentionally anonymous engineer-like technique.

Klee's picture, by contrast, is within the personal, romantic tradition, with roots in the private iconographies of the Symbolist generation. Gabo's tower, to be sure, is not devoid of emblem, as it is topped by a megaphone or loudspeaker, symbolic of public communication. Its form is a cone, one of the regular geometric figures prized by the Constructivists for their perfection and purity. At the top of Klee's tower is a circle or sphere, a similarly perfect form. But geometric forms never carried for Klee quite the same sense of self-sufficient wholeness, of Platonic truth, that they had for the Constructivists. For Klee they were always building blocks, and only a compositional *relationship* of elements could carry full meaning. In this composition, Klee enshrouds his circle in a cloud, obscuring its connection with the scaffold below. Klee's circle is a symbol of the mystic ineffable, beyond the reach and comprehension of the constructing intellect.

Klee's reservations about Constructivist rationalism were

voiced in the Bauhaus Quarterly for 1928: "We construct and keep on constructing, yet intuition is still a good thing. You can do a good deal without it, but not everything."[13] But ten years before, Klee had already written thoughts on the basic problem of form and motivation involved here. After discussing the elements of art and the means of their combination, Klee concluded that pictorial mechanics cannot itself produce "art of the highest level. For at that level," Klee continues, "mystery begins and the intellect counts for nothing. At the highest level, imagination is guided by instinctual stimuli, and illusions are created which buoy us up and stir us more than do the familiar things of earth. In that realm are born the symbols which comfort the mind, which perceives that it need not be chained to the potentialities of terrestrial things."[14]

Klee could gladly use the forms of Constructivism, but no more than with Cubism would he convert to its iconography. Klee could not adopt an ideal utilitarianism in the service of social change. Rather, his purpose, his *ethos,* remained firmly in the romantic tradition.

This distinction between form and content, between how Klee puts a picture together and what he intends it to mean, has been encountered at every stage. In Klee's mind the two could always be separated. Klee used the most advanced forms of his day as a medium through which he cultivated his personal symbolic iconography.

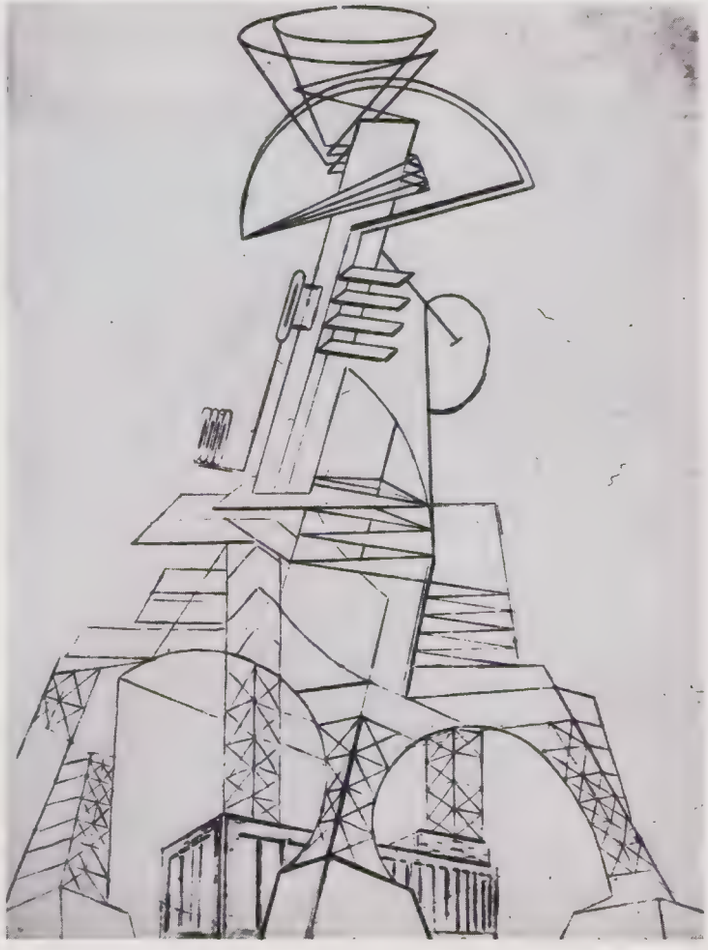
This priority and procedure never varied, and it created, I think, Klee's unique position in early modern art. Klee's form is too advanced and controlled to describe him accurately as an Expressionist. His method is too conscious, his sensibility too pre-Freudian, to place him with Dadas and Surrealists. Klee's metaphysics of course classes him well outside of the School of Paris, though his structure far surpasses in quality most of the Cubist satellites. Klee realized a romantic, poetic impulse that is somewhat rare in our century, but in forms that are very close indeed to the mainstream.[15]

NOTES:

1. Klee's theories are published in Paul Klee, *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (New York: Praeger, 1953; original ed., Munich: Langen, Bauhausbücher 2, 1925); Jürg Spiller, ed., *Paul Klee Notebooks: Vol. I: The Thinking Eye* (New York: Wittenborn, 1961), and *Vol. II: The Nature of Nature* (New York: Wittenborn, 1973).
2. I refer in sequence to the brief texts Joseph-E. Muller, *Klee, Figures and Masks* (New York: Tudor, 1961), and Werner Schmalenbach, *Paul Klee. Fische* (Stuttgart; Reclam, 1958); for the first three quoted terms to the basic work Will Grohmann, *Paul Klee* (New York: Abrams [1955]); and for the last two to Christian Geelhaar, *Paul Klee and the Bauhaus* (Greenwich, Conn.: N.Y. Graphic, 1973).
3. For documentation of these matters see Hans Maria Wingler, *The Bauhaus* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969); and for an extensive examination of their historical and theoretical background, see Marcel Franciscono, *Walter Gropius and the Creation of the Bauhaus in Weimar* (Urbana: U. of Illinois Press, 1971).
4. The most central was Moholy-Nagy's own *Von Material zu Architecture* of 1928, appearing as Bauhausbücher 14, 1929.
5. See the author's "Paul Klee and Cubism, 1912-1926" (Ph.D. dissertation, Institute of Fine Arts, N.Y.U., 1974).
6. My choice of a Cubist print for this comparison reflects my belief that the principles of Cubism would have been particularly clear and accessible to Klee in their graphic form. For example, Klee studied Picasso's 1911 etchings to Max Jacob's *Saint Matorel* in the second Blue Rider exhibition. The Rupf collection also contained these prints, and (while, curiously, neither Braque's *Fox* nor its usual companion Picasso's *Still Life With Bottle*) the Braque 1911 etching *Job*.
7. For an analysis of this little-examined period of Klee, see the author's dissertation, chap. 10.
8. Klee's basic theory of the elements of line, tonality, and color and their intrinsic qualities was set forth in his 1924 Jena Kunstverein lecture, published in Felix Klee, *Paul Klee* (New York: Braziller, 1962), pp. 168-179.
9. Naum Gabo, "The Realistic Manifesto," in *Theories of Modern Art,* ed. Herschel B. Chipp (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1968), pp. 325-330.
10. Recorded in Petra Petitpierre, *Aus der Malklasse von Paul Klee* (Bern: Benteli, 1957), p. 11 (my translation).
11. This work was probably that listed in Galerie Van Diemen, Berlin, "Erste Russische Kunstausstellung," 1922, as no. 309, "Architectonic Project for an Electric Plant (for the Electrification of Russia)" (my translation).
12. Naum Gabo, recent communication to the author. I am much indebted to Mr. Gabo for his kind interest in this matter. I must state in fairness that he does not agree with all of the details of similarity that I propose for the two drawings.
13. Reprinted, among other places, in Spiller, ed., *The Thinking Eye,* p. 69.
14. Quoted in Felix Klee, *op. cit.,* p. 155.
15. I wish to express here my thanks to the Paul Klee Foundation and to Mr. Felix Klee for facilitating my study of Klee in many ways over several years. Part of the present essay was read in abbreviated form at the 1976 Meeting of the College Art Association.

Fig. 11. Paul Klee, Limits of the Intellect, 1927. *Oil and watercolor on panel, 21-5/8 x 16-1/8". Private Collection.*

Fig. 12. Naum Gabo, Project for a Radio Station, 1919-20. *Pen and ink on paper. Collection U.S.S.R. Reproduced courtesy of Naum Gabo.*



PAUL KLEE: THE LESSON OF THE MASTER

DEBORAH ROSENTHAL

Klee's lesson is not that of the pedagogue, but of the savant, replete with examples and implications for the present.

We are all children to the past.
—Randall Jarrell, *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*

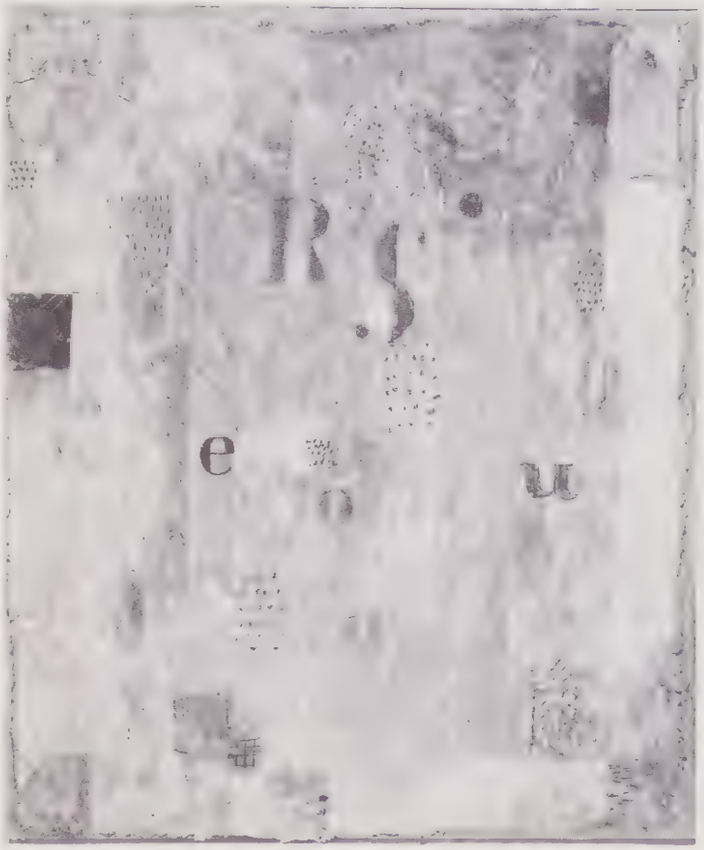
The great distance from which most contemporary abstractionists view Paul Klee is disproportionate both to the mere thirty-seven years that have elapsed since his death and to the overwhelming importance he could have for their education. Klee's death in 1940 occurred on the eve of the World War which dislocated abstraction from one continent to another; to modern (postwar) minds, it may seem that much of Klee belongs to and should be left in the Old World. With modern eyes to see Klee as an abstract painter, we need to look back past the giant postwar abstractions to which we are accustomed, back to Klee's tiny works; to learn from his abstract theory, we must orient ourselves to an artist who explains thereby the evolution and presence of many images in his painting rather than almost none.

The singularity of Klee's work is frequently stressed to the detriment of understanding the coherence of his position; for instance, his highly mutable voice has been invoked to explain the homogenized oeuvre of a Dubuffet. Klee himself characterized the style of his work as a "romanticism without pathos." Dubuffet's repetitive, overburdened sensibility is the antithesis of Klee's romanticism. Where Dubuffet blurts out the same noise each time, Klee speaks in as many tongues as Goethe. Metaphor is the means, in such a style, by which structures and meaning are bound together. Understanding this can lead us to the very heart of a way to make paintings which is, I believe, with Mondrian's neo-plasticism, one of the two wellsprings of abstract art in this century. Notably excepting the work of a few painters in America and abroad, it seems ironic but true nonetheless that these wellsprings have been allowed to dry up. (They have, I would add, provided underground nourishment for a rising crop of figurative painters, some of whose work demonstrates an awareness of abstraction as potential natural resource.)

In fact, Klee seems to continue to be one of the early 20th-century avant-garde artists with whom we can make no peace (Kandinsky is another such victim.). We may gain some ease with his paintings by beginning with their resemblance to familiar paintings, specifically Cubist still life. In one respect Klees, more than any other paintings of this century, share this characteristic of Cubist still life: an insistence, removed from representation, on having palpable depth even as they reassert the surface, even extend beyond the surface toward us; so that sometimes a Klee line seems the edge of a prism whose faces extend both into the picture space and out again. Sometimes we may even feel, not from confusion but indeed because of the inevitability with which edge-line, colored plane, and other-colored plane meet, that we have a view from several facets of the prism.

In Cubist still life, though we may feel the effect is this fanciful, we know the intent is serious. Thus (identifying science with profundity), we name their purpose with words borrowed from science: to see form more profoundly, to penetrate beyond the appearance of things. By overlapping transparent planes, and detaching lines from masses, the Cubists came up with composite forms which show the back, sides, and front of the form simultaneously—that is, arranged side by side, or on top of each other, in an overlapping that implies depth.

The grammatical rules for the "order. . .from motion" Klee mentioned in his *Creative Credo* of 1920 were already in existence. From the Cubist planes placed side by side as well



Paul Klee, Vocal Fabric of the Singer Rosa Silber, 1922. *Gouache and gesso on canvas, 20¼ x 16-3/8". Courtesy Museum of Modern Art.*

Paul Klee, Pastorale, 1927. *Tempera on canvas, mounted on wood, 27¼ x 20-5/8". Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund.*

as from their distribution of tones over prismatic forms throughout the canvas, Klee could derive a compositional structure which extends to the edges of the canvas with equal weights in all directions, for instance, the checkerboard. As well, from their system of lines separated from masses, he derived a purely graphic scaffolding which reproduced the plastic contour of their composite forms. Despite the non-naturalistic character lent to the Cubist paintings by these procedures, their internal scale points continually back to pictorial decisions taken with reference to perception.

Klee's paintings so obviously go off in a different direction that it should barely seem exaggeration if I say he is the only Cubist to have made out of Cubism abstraction based completely on the conceptual. One example of his variance with Cubist procedures may point to the typical means by which Klee took his own direction. Picasso and Braque, while continuing to make still lifes, started to use written words or bits of trope l'oeil like marbleizing to measure through hyper-naturalism the displacement from conventions of serene meditation. In Klee's paintings, too, we find letters and words. A look at two fairly early, well known paintings in which they appear will lead us to the metaphoric basis of Klee's abstraction.

Klee's oil painting of 1919, *Villa R,* is named after the letter which appears in it, as some of Picasso's were named after the words in them. Having noted this, though, we realize that instead of the kind of painting (Picasso's) in which a letter could be a sort of stand-in for a small object in the company of other small objects in a circumscribed space, we find this *R* in a completely different and alien context. It is located in the foreground of a conventional landscape, complete with winding road, house in the middle distance, mountains in the background, moon and sun in the sky—but here, of course, we falter, and begin to see what this *R* may mean. Gigantic, but flat and weightless, its dimensions neither push it up against the picture plane to form a repoussoir nor push it back into distance to mold space—the huge green *R* does not submit to conventional uses. Its frontality and primacy do make possible a recession into the landscape, but only because we associate its pride of place, its forwardness, with the same qualities found in the first letter of a manuscript page.

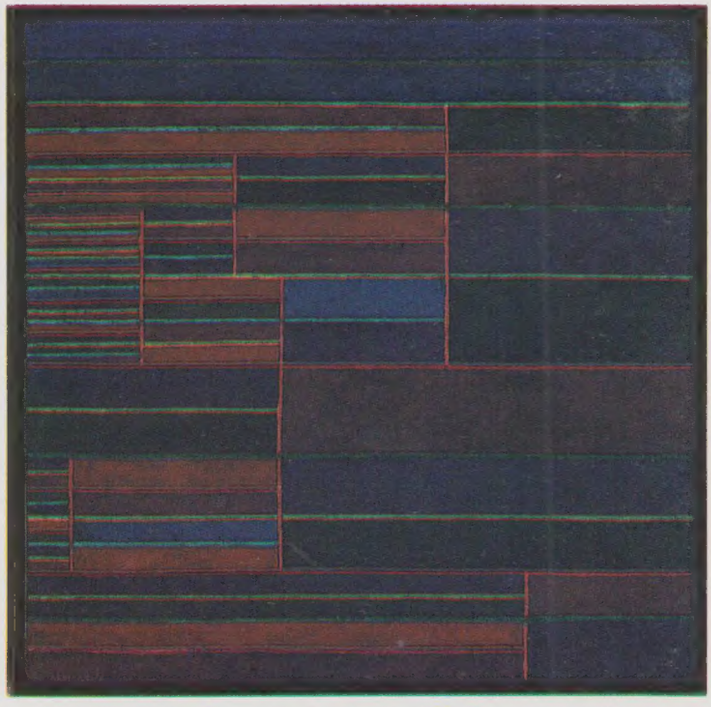
In 1922, Klee painted *The Vocal Fabric of the Singer Rosa Silber.* Whether or not this is a great Klee, it does seem important as an emblem of Klee's path out of Cubist meaning. This is underlined by its apparent similarities to Cubist paintings: their palette virtually without color, even their tentative scratchy hatchings. It seems to share the informal manner of those paintings; yet more than *Villa R,* it helps us understand what Klee meant by calling his mature works "exact experiments in the realm of art." What is exact about *The Vocal Fabric of the Singer Rosa Silber*? The title gives the beginning of an answer: *The Vocal Fabric. . .*: we look at the painting—it *is* a vocal fabric, or at least at first we can see it is a fabric, slightly worn around the edges, and in certain places, rougher than in others; with different textures—and then we stop. Texture—the vocal texture—the texture of a voice—the secret starts to explain itself, even diminish.

It is at just this point of reading a Klee painting that it is tempting to stop altogether, thinking the rest a matter of "illustration"—the title a sort of caption that describes, albeit cleverly and with puns, what happens in the painting: we love to talk about paintings, we love criticism that extracts the painter's meaning, but let a painter help us into the meaning of a painting with words—*that* would be too easy.

The key to understanding Klee's meanings does seem to have to do with words, but only by analogy. Analogy is the glue he uses in affixing title to painting. A list of some of Klee's titles reveals that each is a fragmentary prose-poem evoking the chief idea of the painting: *Stratification Sets In, Ardent Flowering, Physiognomic Lightning, At Seven Over Rooftops, Ad Marginem, Propagation of Light, O the Rumours!, Mountain Under Compulsion, Harmonized Battle, Dominated Group, Pomona Growing Up.*

Metaphor is the agent of relating structure and meaning in these paintings, in all Klee paintings. From poetry, we know that metaphor is a device by which the poet identifies feelings about a thing with the qualities from another thing in order to describe the first, e.g., the opening picture of the urn in Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn,* "Thou still unravished bride of quietness." In a lyric poem (say one by Keats or Shelley, or Heine or Goethe), within a small and measured structure, the poet uses perhaps one overriding metaphor and a series of smaller ones to build up layers of such comparative descriptions. Only at the end of the poem can the reader feel he has absorbed the cumulative effect

Paul Klee, Illuminated Leaf, 1929. *Courtesy Paul Klee Foundation, Museum of Fine Arts, Berne.*



Paul Klee, In the Current Six Thresholds, 1929. *Tempera and oil on canvas, 17 x 17". Courtesy Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.*

of all these impressions; he probably feels that in sum he has a strong mental picture of the poet regarding particular objects in a certain mood.

Klee's observation that "painting has the advantage of simultaneity" rests on a direct comparison of painting to poetry and music (which also uses metaphor, without words), at least respecting the interaction of structure and total effect in each. Whereas both music and poetry depend on the duration of their structures to repeat and contrast metaphoric comparisons, and add up to a unified mood only at the end, painting yields the sum of its effects—its mood—at first glance, even though its structures are then grasped in the eye's consecutive motions through all parts of the composition. Seen in this light, Klee and his fellow abstractionist and theorist, Kandinsky, are as clearly pioneers of the lyric mode in the twentieth century as Keats and Shelley were in the nineteenth.

Let us begin, again, with what Klee's paintings look like, this second time with the unfamiliar—those things that make his work look like exotica rather than paintings in our own tradition. Our first glances at Klees suggest the "look" and form of antique stelae, mosaics, Egyptian wall paintings, Islamic floor patterns, children's drawings, Swiss chocolate boxes, Coptic textiles, sheets of music, chessboards, Persian carpets, children's games, illuminated manuscript pages (any sizeable Klee exhibition will prove this catalogue incomplete).

Since the seventeenth century, painters have worked in three or four modes—landscape, still life, portraiture, historical painting—each of which implied a "look" or form as different one from the other as a chessboard and a child's drawing. Pushing his use of the conventions of the specific forms in one way or another, the painter led us to feel the way he felt about the objects. The so-called complete painter, that is, the painter who worked in two or three modes, led us to empathize with his different experiences of himself as person in the world.

In a parallel sense, Klee too is a complete painter, an abstract one. Klee too wants a "formal cosmos," in his phrase, which is as mutable—with as many "looks" and forms—as his experience of himself as a human being. He differs from the traditional painter in his starting point: setting out to paint a picture, Klee begins with an overriding metaphor. That is to say, he begins as the poet does, with feelings. Like Goethe, Klee has a "persian" mode; like Keats, a "classical" one. His idea, like the poet's, is that he can describe feeling and thought most intensively through qualities we associate with a kind of object or a kind of experience. (Poets are lucky enough, since they work in words, to be able to use synaesthesia—the suggestion through one sense of the experience of another. Painters are more limited in that, for instance, they cannot use the sense of smell.) Klee's metaphor, although it originates in his mind, is not necessarily or even usually a kind of comparison that no one has ever thought of before. For proof, we need only think of paintings like *Landscapely-Physiognomic* in which the metaphor, the landscape-like-a-face, is so ordinary as almost to be banal.

In answer to an objection that this method seems more literary than visual, a way to go about "illustrating an idea" rather than making a painting, one must answer that all paintings are just this, the illustration of an idea: choosing a mode like still life or landscape, a figurative painter chooses the structural framework that is appropriate to certain ideas to the exclusion of some others.

Calling his work "graphic art," Klee means in relation to traditional art: where nineteenth-century figurative painting found various ways to compose from reality back into something that approximates in effect or diffusity what is perceived, Klee uses line to conceptualize all shapes and forms. In his paintings, line makes a graphic reality that corresponds to the painter's idea. To make a good metaphor, both sides of the comparison must be pushed to a point where the union of their qualities is virtually irreducible, a relation of essences. In painting, drawing is a way of reaching such an essence.

We will expect Klee to look in many places for linear conventions by which metaphoric comparisons may be constructed. One such source, in Masson's phrase the "sacred arts," gives rise to many Klee paintings. The Islamic floor and rug pattern, for instance, is a traditional craft based on numerical ratios (the so-called Magic Squares) and on the interlocking of regular polygons by means of the simple geometric operations of translation, rotation, and reflection. In *The Thinking Eye,* we find Klee teaching such operations with simple geometric forms to adumbrate metaphors of magic, infinite regress, and the like (as in a painting like *Portal of a Mosque*).

I do not need to remark that this graphic art of Klee's uses color. The Cubist composite contour gave Klee a line that set one foot in depth while the other remained in the plane. Concomitantly, color is freed from atmospheric purposes. Where line is the measure, color may be used in an accentual way, placing objects in pictorial space not because it reflects light molding objects, but because the interactions of colors move the eye. The rate at which the eye jumps from color to color may be determined by using complementaries, for instance, for leaps or infinitesimal graduation of tones for slow movement. In light of this, it is clear that all colors are to be found on Klee's palette.

When we find Klee studying nature in *The Thinking Eye* (the second volume of which is called *The Nature of Nature*), we should not be surprised to find him occupying himself with the mysterious phenomenon of growth. Since growing is the process by which one thing in nature is changed or metamorphosed over time into something else, it is a theme particularly fitted to the painter who constructs by means of comparing things. We *do* visualize different developmental stages of one organism through the completely different forms it takes—roots and flowers, for instance.

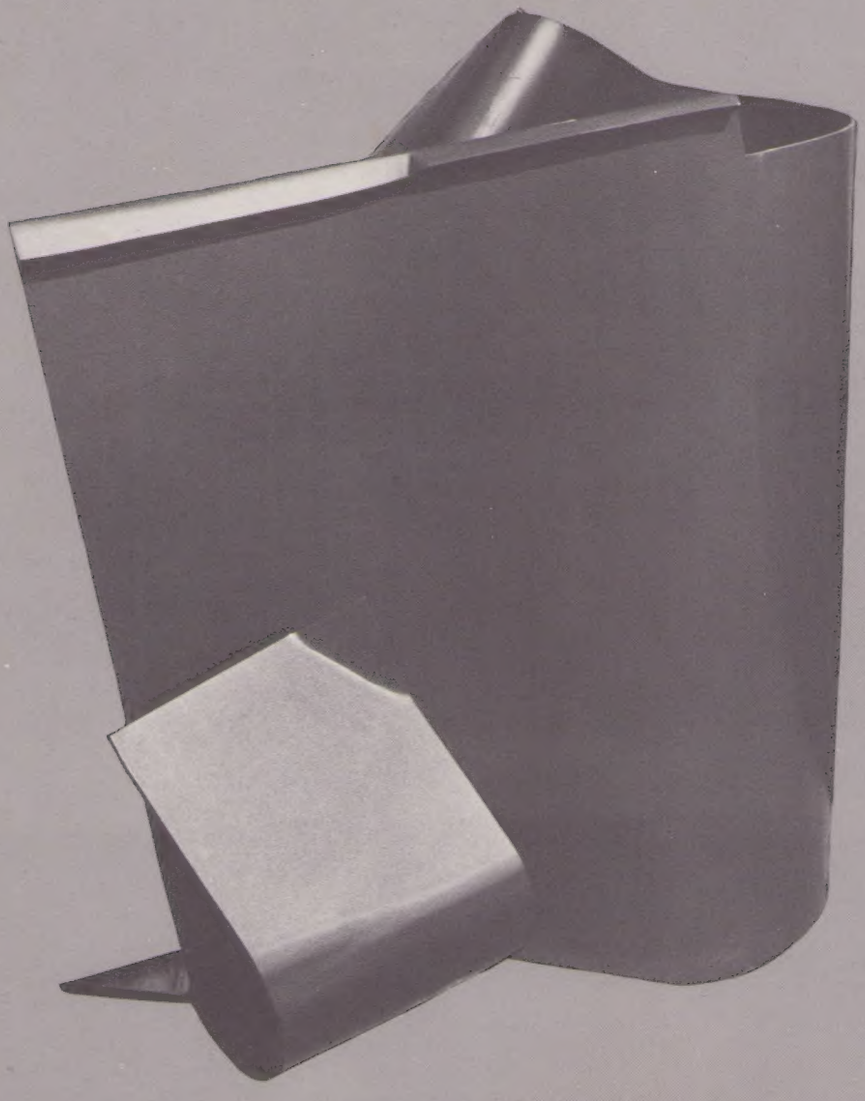
To illuminate the organic relations existing between different forms of the same plant, Klee must find the common source dictating the dimensions and appearance of each form as it appears. In a plant, as in any nonconscious natural organism, natural laws relating to function govern the permutations of form. In most cases, these natural laws make the changes seem mysterious.

Thus these are the sorts of questions Klee must ask vis-à-vis plants, and which indicate the kinds of knowledge on which metaphoric abstraction is predicated: in a plant, which part produces which other part (what *is* the fruit in the development of the plant?); from which part of the plant do the seemingly dependent (or smaller) parts come—in function, are they actually primary (larger)? In the case of some plants, it is known—and Klee knew this—that a numerical ratio called the Fibonacci series is manifested through the geometrical pattern into which the organism grows (as in the pine cone). The seemingly fantastic morphologies of Klee drawings like *Diagram of a Palmetto Leaf,* of paintings such as *Ardent Flowering, Cosmic Flora, Illuminated Leaf,* to name a few out of hundreds, prove no more fantastic than the fruits of radical structural knowledge brought to bear on the mysteriousness of the evolution of form.

There is a logical, I hope inescapable, conclusion which I do not intend to reach here, but which I hope will confront any visitor to a Klee exhibition by virtue of his or her own extension of my argument. It bears on a question which might simply be put: "Yes, but *I* don't understand why his paintings have figures in them." On this question one should bring to bear not only one's sense that figures suggest the uniqueness human beings have by virtue of consciousness; but as well and equally, the important fact that intelligence and consciousness are themselves organic, the agents and measures of growth and changes in the states of the human being. The examination of such changes, effected socially, culturally, or emotionally (in which last case the changes may be infinitesimal, the matter of one moment and the next), is the vision of figure painters—Klee among them. And further, if we are no longer mystified to find Klee's emphasis falling on the roots of the plant rather than the stem or the leaves, can we wonder that among his people we find so many children? Or is it only a matter of course, especially when we are reminded of another artist in whose major work children figure largely—and whose language seemed in his time the language of a child—Wordsworth, who wrote "The Child is father of the Man."

ROBERT MURRAY

September 17–October 8



Robert Murray *Juneau* 1977 Aluminum painted green.

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CHRISTOPHER MAKOS

MILANO. 1976. B/W PHOTOGRAPH.

SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 8

Christopher Makos' work can be placed with the work of those great artists who protested man's inhumanity to man. Makos shares a truth with Hogarth, Rowlandson, Daumier and Goya. For this reason, although a very young man he has influenced pictorial photography. He is an artist in photography, who is driven by a compulsion, beyond his own creative achievements, to establish new standards, influences and uses of the medium. A foremost exponent of 'Punk' he drives the expression in a different direction from 'Pop'.

The ubiquitous lense of Makos is guided by a great individual energy. An energy which seeks out and reveals a series of symbols that can summarize our society with a trenchant force; symbols which define the collapse of our cultural compulsives, our myths and the very precepts upon which our culture has been built.

Concurrently with the opening of this exhibition Stonehill Publishing Company will release a new book under the title of WHITE TRASH: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF CHRISTOPHER MAKOS. The book will contain 128 pages with over 100 fabulous photographs plus 3 giant foldouts; in a nine by twelve inch softcover format. The price of the book is $8.95 plus an additional $1.00 to cover postage and handling charges. Please mail check to Andrew Crispo Gallery.

ANDREW CRISPO GALLERY

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